

## Chapter 1 - Reincarnation as a Fairy

Upon awakening, I found myself transformed into a fairy.

I couldn't quite fathom the reason why, but I had a distinct understanding that I had become a diminutive fairy, fitting within the palm of a hand. As I glanced behind me, I noticed translucent wings reminiscent of a dragonfly – yeah, those exist, don't they? However, I vividly remembered being a human.

Hmm, could it be... Did I experience some form of reincarnation as a fairy? Does that imply I've passed away? Wait, why am I unable to recall anything...

Oh well, no sense dwelling on it.

So, where am I... in a forest, I assume? It seems to be an ordinary forest with no apparent anomalies, but where precisely is this forest located? Hold on, is that a rainbow!? Enormous! When I looked upward at the sky, I beheld a colossal rainbow. The colors are different, more akin to white. And there are two moons. Right, this must be an alternate world. A world with an immense white rainbow and two moons – definitely not Earth.

But why, I wonder? Why am I so readily accepting of my transformation into a diminutive fairy in an alternate world? I seem to inherently grasp the extent of my new state.

Alright, let's first consider whether departing from the forest might be wise. However, if I recklessly leave the forest, I might end up captured by humans and spend my life confined. But then again, I do need information about my surroundings; perhaps displaying a map could be helpful.

\*Poof\*

Oh, a map materialized. I can actually summon a map. Impressive. I summoned a map quite naturally, but wait... is it usual to possess the ability to summon maps? Oh well, let's not dwell on that. It's convenient to have, and it's not as if it would cause any inconvenience.

Furthermore, this map... it's displaying a red dot. And it's moving... Huh, let's investigate. Oh, it appears the map possesses an auto-mapping feature. Handy.

Following the map, I flew toward the red dot. I can fly quite gracefully. Thankfully, I don't generate a buzzing sound like a bee; that might drive me to madness. Additionally, I'm flying at a considerable speed, yet it doesn't seem to cause dryness in my eyes. I can perceive the wind, but it's a peculiar sensation.

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Oops, I sense something disconcerting ahead. The location marked by the red dot on the map is where the unsettling feeling emanates... Ah, I see. Monsters. Beings unfamiliar to me, yet I strangely understand that they're monsters. So, the red dots on the map represent monsters. It's likely best not to approach. Let's distance ourselves from the red dot.

After journeying in the opposite direction of the red dot for a while, the map displayed an array of new dots. And not just red dots, but blue ones as well.

I wonder what the blue dots signify? Since red dots represent monsters, could blue dots indicate humans? Are monsters attacking humans? Given that there's a road within the forest, perhaps travelers on the road are under assault. What should I do? Should I offer assistance? However, what if I get caught? After all, I'm a fairy. Although I'm uncertain of the value of fairies in this world, if we're considered a rare existence, I might end up captured.

The question of whether I can help doesn't arise. If humans are injured, I can heal them. If they're at a disadvantage, I can provide support through magic. It's as if I instinctively understand these abilities.

Oh right, I can employ magic. It seems magic exists within this world. Well, if semi-transparent hologram-like maps can levitate, it's not

implausible for magic to exist. Alright, if magic is available, I can defend myself. Let's go and assess the situation.

Oh, there are humans!

As I draw near, I observe a lavish carriage stationed on the forest path. Knights are standing guard, while brigands are assaulting them. I discreetly observe from within the forest, assuming that someone as small as me won't be noticed.

Wait, am I truly palm-sized? Humans are incredibly large.

Consequently, the blue-clad knights are the protagonists, and the red-clad ruffians are the antagonists. It seems red dots don't exclusively denote monsters, huh? What are these ruffians exactly? Bandits? Given the forest setting, perhaps forest bandits? Well, um... oh right, highway robbers.

I detect hostility from the ruffians, indicating that the knights likely aren't the malefactors and the ruffians aren't the heroes. Presumably, it's the inverse. Therefore, the red dots on the map signify enemies, and the blue dots denote allies.

Should I intervene? Hmmm...

I decide to utilize healing magic on the fallen knights. How about that? Oh, they're stirring. Attempting to rise! Whew, that's a relief. Although both the knights and ruffians appear momentarily startled, the knights swiftly initiate an offensive.

Very well, let's supplement this with some supportive magic. Haha... they seem surprised. Alright, proceed! Yes! Defeat them!

Before long, the knights have subdued the ruffians. Actually, I might have caused their demise. Oh, they're undoubtedly deceased. Dispatching them like this... But it's to be expected. Given the medieval backdrop, permitting bandits who attacked such a sumptuous carriage to escape isn't feasible. However, capturing such a large group in this forest wouldn't be practical either.

While observing, a maid emerges from the carriage, followed by an exquisitely beautiful silver-haired girl. Wow, silver hair, such a quintessential hallmark of another world. She's extraordinarily stunning and adorned in a splendid outfit.

She's unmistakably of noble birth. Although I can't comprehend their dialogue, I can audibly perceive the sounds.

Nevertheless, everything sounds like gibberish to me.

Hold on, did she just glance in this direction? Did she spot me, despite my minuscule size?

For a time, the silver-haired girl fixated her gaze this way, and after conferring with the knights, she reentered the carriage and vanished from sight. Whew, my heart raced. It seems the knights have concluded their handling of the ruffians'

corpses and are preparing to depart.

Hmm... what should I do? Perhaps if I follow them, I'll ultimately reach a town.

Alright, let's proceed.

## Chapter 2 - The Princess

This kingdom is visibly declining.

Even as a young princess who hasn't reached adulthood, I'm being sent out for diplomatic missions due to the lack of manpower.

For several years now, there have been poor harvests, and on top of that, the highly capable former prime minister passed away due to illness. Furthermore, this winter, even my mother, the queen, succumbed to the same illness.

When the former prime minister began to show symptoms, it was thought to be a minor ailment and wasn't treated as a serious issue. He was even working during the initial stages. However, when my mother showed the same symptoms, the royal palace was thrown into chaos due to the only precedent being a death.

As soon as winter ended and the Garm season turned, my older brother, the crown prince, and I, the first princess, were dispatched as envoys to request aid from neighboring countries for food supplies and my mother's treatment. My brother was sent to the southern neighboring country, and I to the western one.

The siblings have another older brother, the second prince, who remains at the eastern border. The country to the east was at war with us until a few years ago, and even though we are in a ceasefire now, vigilance is still necessary.

The Energia Kingdom to the west, where I was sent, is renowned as a magic powerhouse, boasting highly skilled magicians. I had hoped that the queen's ailment could be cured by that person, but negotiations never even got off the ground. We were denied a diagnosis, and our request for food supplies was ignored entirely.

When a country begins to falter, a series of unfortunate events seems to follow suit. During the return journey while still feeling disheartened, I was attacked by bandits.

“Team 1, guard the right! Team 2, the left! Team 3, protect the carriage! Injured members, join Team 3 if you can move!”

“Damn it! Who are these guys? They’re unexpectedly skilled!”

The shouts of the escort knights could be heard. Initially, the bandits seemed like no significant issue, but not only were their numbers substantial, but their skills were also considerable. The knights were being wounded, and I was terrified by the fact that we were being pushed back.

“Your Highness, please don’t worry.”

The lady-in-waiting who had initially said that was now pale.

In the past, it was inconceivable for royals with escorts to be attacked by bandits. Although we had heard that banditry had increased due to the annual poor harvests, we never expected it to escalate to this extent. I closed my eyes and considered that I might need to brace myself for the worst.

However, that sense of despair was abruptly dispelled by a gentle light. It seemed like nobody comprehended what was happening at that moment. Both the escort and the bandits were stunned, and within the carriage, the lady-in-waiting and I were left dumbfounded.

“The wounds... they’re healing...?”

A fallen escort rose, and upon witnessing it, the head of the escort issued immediate orders.

“Teams 1 and 2, fall back! Team 3, hold your ground! Crush them all at once!”

Then, that gentle light descended once more, and what followed was overwhelming. In an instant, we had cornered and subdued the opponents who had previously put up such a struggle.

“Heh, heh, heh, whew, whew... Your Highness, you’re safe now.”

The lady-in-waiting, who had been pale, seemed to have regained her composure.

“Yes, thank you. I’ll step out for a moment.”

“No, you mustn’t! It’s dangerous!”

Ignoring the lady-in-waiting’s immediate objection, I stepped outside the carriage. The head of the escort hurriedly approached me.

“Your Highness Tilles! Are you alright!?”

“Yes, thank you for your assistance.”

“No! Your kind words are unnecessary!”

A large man seemed quite pleased to be dealing with someone as young as me. I appreciated his sentiment.

“Now, about that light that descended during the attack... do you know what it was?”

As I posed the question, I shifted my gaze toward the forest. There was light. I couldn’t discern when it began emitting light, but by the time I noticed, it was already glowing during the attack. The head of the escort also directed his gaze in that direction.

That... could it be a spirit? No, perhaps a fairy?

It appeared just like the fairies from the old storybooks. A beautifully adorned girl, no bigger than the palm of a hand, floated while emitting particles of light and adorned with wings. She had pretty



green hair and was clad in a tiny peach-colored dress.

Usually, when describing a woman's appearance, hair length isn't the focus of discussion. This is because women, from royalty to commoners, all keep their hair long. Yet, that fairy's hair only extended to about her shoulders. Perhaps it would be obstructed by her wings.

She seemed to think she was hiding, but the moment our eyes met, she appeared profoundly startled. Despite her intentions, it was virtually impossible to conceal herself while radiating particles of light like that.

“Waah...!”

Both the head of the escort and the lady-in-waiting displayed expressions of astonishment. The surrounding escort knights began to take notice as well, and it seemed everyone was taken aback. Understandably so. After all, fairies, beings one only encounters in fairy tales or mythologies from religious texts, were physically present before our eyes.

“This... what should we do?”

I inadvertently murmured.

“Well, there's likely nothing we can do.”

Though not exactly a question, the head of the escort responded earnestly.

“I agree... I doubt we can capture her.”

Under normal circumstances, capturing might have been an option, but in a forest teeming with bandits and monsters, chasing a fairy around was probably not feasible. Moreover, the more pressing concern was returning to the capital as soon as possible.

“We should leave it be and continue our journey.”

“Yes! Hey, all of you! Let’s depart! Regroup and rest only after we’ve exited the forest!”

I returned to the carriage, and soon after, the procession set off. And then, I noticed that particles of light were descending from the carriage’s ceiling.

### **Chapter 3 - From the Carriage Roof**

Since assisting the noble carriage, I’ve been hiding on its roof as it continued its journey.

Leaving the forest, taking a break, and now moving through a serene countryside. Under the vast sky, surrounded by gently swaying crops and the rustling wind, the carriage rattled along the road, creating an illusion that I had stepped into a fantasy RPG.

A group of cavalry surrounded the carriage, and a massive white rainbow hung in the sky. The knights surrounding us and the enormous white rainbow created an atmosphere that heightened the fantasy element, sending my excitement through the roof.

Observing the sun, I noticed it was gradually tilting to the right. Is this the northern hemisphere? If it were the southern hemisphere, the sun should move to the left, probably. So, are we heading east now? And the direction of the giant white rainbow is south. If that’s the case, the white rainbow would cover nearly half of the equator. It’s huge.

However, carriage travel turned out to be more intense than I anticipated. The rocking was insane. If I were human-sized, it might be bearable enough to just feel a bit sore in the buttocks. But at my fairy size, the up-and-down movement felt incredibly vast. Imagine being on a vehicle that rocks about 20 cm up and down. It’s rough. It’s like a roller coaster!

Around the time the sun began to set, the group came to a halt. Huh, are we camping here for the night?

The carriage stopped in a spot where the road widened beneath a slightly larger tree, and after some conversation, the knights began setting up tents and preparing meals. The beautiful silver-haired girl didn't come out, but a maid appeared in her place, working swiftly. As usual, I couldn't understand what they were saying.

As I absentmindedly observed, something shocking happened. They were using magic!

Several knights and maids started using magic to prepare their meals! A tiny magic circle would light up at their fingertips, and then flames would appear. Can people in this world use magic? But during the fight with the bandits, no one used magic, right? I wonder why. Could it be that the magic isn't powerful enough to be used in combat?

Suddenly, I realized something. My stomach wasn't growling. Even though I should be hungry since I haven't eaten anything since becoming a fairy, I didn't feel hungry at all, even as I watched them prepare the meal. I already understood that I could live without eating anything. It dawned on me again that I'm no longer human.

Still, I couldn't help but desire the sweet-looking tea that the silver-haired girl was drinking in the carriage. My body seemed to crave sweetness.

Trying to figure out a way to secretly borrow some sweetness, I found myself back in the morning. Somehow, I had fallen asleep. The carriage was moving again, and I woke up abruptly due to the rough carriage motion. **Chapter 4 - The Capital City**

Wow, this is amazing!

I can see what looks like a big city in the distance.

Three days have passed since the camping night.

While I've seen towns and villages along the way, we haven't stopped at any. It seems this group is making quite a rapid march. But it looks

like this journey is coming to an end soon.

As far as the eye can see, there's a vast grassland with occasional straight trees. A seemingly large city rises atop a slightly elevated hill, as if the hill is wearing a hat. It's still too far to make out clearly, but I can see some pointed tower roofs. Could that be the castle? Is there a castle there!?

The knights around me all gaze at the city with expressions of relief and nostalgia. That city must be our destination, no doubt. Their reactions are enough to convey that. We've encountered wolf-like monsters along the way, but they've been handled without much danger. Maybe those bandits were the irregular ones.

Near the city, there seems to be a large river. As we get closer to the city, I can see larger ships moving about. It looks like it's a natural river adjacent to the city, as it seems to curve irregularly.

With the sun behind us, the river surface doesn't glitter, but the city seems to be basking in the sunset, glowing beautifully in shades of crimson. I'm sure it would look incredible from the other side too. The contrast between the city's silhouette against the sunset and the sparkling orange reflection on the river surface creates a scene that couldn't be anything but beautiful.

As we approach, it's evident that the city is indeed large. Surrounded by massive walls, I can't see what the inside is like from here. I'm eager to enter.

The towns I've seen along the way have been like historic districts, quite thrilling. And the big city I saw just now has me excited as well. Truth be told, I love the medieval Western architecture. Or rather, I love fantasy cityscapes.

Though I barely remember my past life, I probably wouldn't have been this amazed even if I traveled around Europe back then. After all, no matter how medieval the cityscape, there would still be modern civilization elements like cars in sight.

But here, I'm in a living world, experiencing it firsthand! And it's a

fantasy world with magic and creatures like me, a fairy! Of course, my excitement would be off the charts!

In the midst of my excitement, we approached the city gates. The city is enclosed by massive walls, and there's an impressively large gate that looks like a castle entrance. There seems to be a watchtower atop the gate, slightly elevated.

The roads near the city seem to be paved, which has significantly improved the unbearable rocking from before. I'm relieved. The rattling sound of the carriage moving and shaking has now quieted, replaced by the rhythmic clatter of horse hooves.

However, for such a big city, I don't see many people coming in and out. I imagined there might be a checkpoint with a line of people wanting to enter the city, but that's not the case. We passed through the gate without stopping. But one of the new-looking gatekeepers seemed absent-minded and got scolded by one of the knights. Hang in there, rookie. You seemed a bit suspicious in your behavior. I couldn't help but chuckle at the sight.

As we passed through the gate, a cityscape of predominantly white walls and red roofs welcomed us. It's a really large city. The main street is three stories high, and buildings a bit further in seem to be two stories. There are a few buildings that are four stories or more, although they're fewer in number. It's probably due to the city being on a hill; the road inclines as you head towards the center.

And as expected, there's a castle! A castle! How amazing!

However, whether it's because it's dusk or not, there's a somewhat desolate atmosphere about the place. Many buildings have flowerpots by the windows, but there are no blossoms. Moreover, foot traffic is sparse. Near the city walls, it's quite dark due to the shadows, giving off a lonely vibe.

Also, I think I was expecting something even more fantastical. The cityscape is somewhat ordinary, and there are no glowing magic circles or floating crystals like I had hoped for. Frankly, I'm a bit disappointed.

Though the people in the city are sparse, I can sense a restless energy as they look over in our direction. Perhaps a noble's carriage is a rare sight here. Wrapped in this unsettled atmosphere, the procession continues deeper into the city, clattering away. Will we make it to the castle? I hope so!

## Chapter 5 - Gate Guard

That day, I was assigned to guard the west gate as a gatekeeper, just like any other day. My senior colleagues were grumbling about old wounds, but I took it upon myself to shoulder the responsibility of gatekeeping for the morning. The truth is, there has been little traffic in and out of King's Landing lately due to security concerns, so it wasn't too demanding for me. In fact, I appreciated the respite from my seniors' complaints while working as a gatekeeper.

Perhaps it was my relaxed approach that led me to overlook the approaching group. But I wasn't the only one at fault; several of my colleagues and seniors, who were also stationed as gatekeepers, failed to notice the carriages and knights approaching. It was only when they came closer that we sprang into action, dealing with them as if we had spotted them from afar.

As it turned out, the group included royalty, the First Princess of Tires, who had returned from a neighboring country where she had been assisting with crop failure.

Since it was royalty passing through, we didn't need to conduct any rigorous inspections; our main task was to be vigilant for anything suspicious or dangerous that could threaten the royal family. Although I kept a record of their entry into the capital, I wasn't the one responsible for filling it out.

As the group passed by me, still saluting in a formal manner, something caught my eye. There was a gleam on one of the carriages that seemed suspicious. Was there a potential threat? I had never encountered anything like this before. To my surprise, it was a fairy!

Momentarily taken aback, I rushed to report about the presence of the fairy on the carriage. However, one of the knights who followed behind the carriage told me there was no need to report it. Moreover, I was instructed to keep it to myself.

Hold on a minute! I couldn't possibly be the only one who noticed the

fairy. Even though no one else showed it, they surely saw it too. And now they were instructing me, a lowly gate guard, to keep quiet about it! I was dealing with senior members of the group; it felt like a daunting position to be in. Despite feeling the urge to rebel, I decided to simply nod my head in compliance.

As the carriage moved further away, I stole a quick glance at the fairy who had a beautiful and kind smile on her face. The sight of her made me blush involuntarily.

After a while, one of the nearby senior gatekeepers started making a commotion. He exclaimed, "It's healed! It doesn't hurt, it doesn't hurt!"

In this country, almost everyone who fits into the gatekeeping system and is of a certain age and experience has some kind of old wound. Many of these gatekeepers were former wounded soldiers who couldn't endure the harsh battles during the war that ended a few years ago. The able-bodied individuals who had previously served as gatekeepers were reorganized into the Eastern Border Guard.

The seniors were making quite a fuss. It appeared that some of them, who had old leg wounds, realized that they could move normally without pain. This revelation prompted the other seniors to check their own old wounds as well. Some found that their wounds had indeed vanished, and they could move freely without discomfort.

However, not everyone's old wounds had healed. I could sense the disappointment in those seniors whose wounds remained unchanged, and I, too, felt a twinge of disappointment. I had hoped that the constant complaining and boasting about old wounds, which I had grown tired of hearing, would finally come to an end.

That night, during the guard meeting, a gag order was issued. We were instructed not to speak about the fairies or the fact that some of us had been healed from our old wounds. Although told to keep quiet, I felt a weight lifted from my shoulders. It seemed like a secret had been entrusted to us.

After further discussion, it was discovered that the senior members



whose old wounds had healed were stationed near the princess's carriage. It was suggested that perhaps only those who had come within a certain range of the fairies on the carriage experienced this miraculous recovery.

I couldn't help but recall the beautiful smile of the fairy from earlier in the day. In that moment, I found myself hoping that the fairy, who had smiled so kindly at me, might somehow bring salvation to our country, which was starting to lean under various pressures.

## Chapter 6 - The Royal Castle

After crossing several small bridges over rivers and ascending the city, we were met with an impressive black metal fence.

The top of the fence was pointed and had spikes, clearly emphasizing its protective nature. Beyond the fence, the layout was distinctly different from the previous part of the city, with each residence having larger grounds. The scattered luxurious mansions indicated that this was the noble district.

As our procession approached the imposing gate attached to the fence, two men who appeared to be soldiers stood on either side of the gate, timing its opening so that we could pass through without stopping.

Decorative arches resembling white rainbows adorned the top of the gate. I figured these were representations of the white rainbows that must be a common sight in the sky. Well, such a massive rainbow in the sky would surely have some influence on the culture and religion here.

While I could see from a distance that the noble district was filled with luxurious mansions, the details were obscured by the trees. It almost felt like they intentionally made it difficult to see from the outside. Despite the somewhat gentle slope we had ascended so far, the noble district was relatively flat.

Passing through the noble district, we suddenly found ourselves in a forest, surrounded by a fancy atmosphere. It felt as if fairies might appear from anywhere. Oh, right, I'm a fairy too. Unlike the noble district, the forest had a gentle incline.

Exiting the forest, we came across a moat, and beyond the drawbridge, the long-awaited royal castle finally came into view.

So, this group was headed toward the castle. I had a hunch. In that case, the silver-haired girl inside the carriage might not be a noble but a member of the royal family. Despite her youthful appearance, there

was an air of maturity about her – she might be the princess.

Beyond the drawbridge, there was a grand castle wall with a gate. The arch above the gate also seemed to resemble a white rainbow. Passing through such an arched gate, there was a stretch of grassland leading to the actual castle. The cobblestone path through the grassland, seemingly for defensive purposes, was even steeper than before.

I decided it was finally time to leave the carriage that had brought me this far.

Continuing on with the procession might lead us to the final destination, and I didn't want to risk being discovered.

Inside the castle gate, there were various buildings of different sizes. For now, let's head toward the largest and most castle-like building. The blue-roofed towers jutting out from it proclaimed, "I am the castle." If this isn't a castle, I don't know what is.

As I approached, I noticed dragon-like protrusions with open mouths along the edges of the roof and at key points of the structure. Some reliefs that seemed to carry a sense of mystique were also carved into parts of the walls. Viewing the castle from above, I could see it had a horseshoe-shaped structure with an open courtyard in the center. The back of the horseshoe seemed to be the main entrance, where the carriage I had left earlier was headed. The area behind it appeared to be a garden.

Hmm, what should I do?

With such an magnificent castle before me, not choosing to explore was not an option. Fortunately, I don't need food, and since I've been able to sleep and wake up comfortably outdoors during my carriage journey, I don't have to worry about basic survival needs.

However, the sun that had been shining a deep red when we entered the city was now almost completely hidden, and darkness was beginning to settle in. This world seems to have insufficient lighting, so it's likely that it will become pitch black at night. Already, areas

shaded by buildings were quite dark.

My ability claims that I can produce light even in complete darkness, but I'm not that keen on sightseeing in such a condition. Moreover, wandering around a completely dark castle while shining light everywhere might turn it into a horror scene. If it were to become a mere ghost story, that would be one thing, but in this world with monsters, I could easily be mistaken for a luminous creature. That wouldn't end well if they decided to form a hunting party.

Let's find a place to spend the night. Tomorrow, I can explore in the daylight. Fortunately, I have no concerns about daily necessities, so I can leisurely explore as much as I want. I may not have money, but if it's a sightseeing that doesn't require it, then I'm free to indulge to my heart's content.

# Chapter 7 - Return

What is happening here?

I gazed outside the carriage, my mind filled with questions.

This country was supposed to be facing another year of poor harvest. When I departed for the neighboring nation, the seeds had just been sown, and I couldn't discern it then, but even the crops that had been planted early didn't seem vigorous.

But what's this? The fields were flourishing with slightly smaller but vibrant crops. Even to an amateur's eyes, there was an evident vitality in the fields. Could it be that the period of poor harvest is over? Could it really be?

After the encounter with bandits in the forest, we had altered our plans, bypassing all the towns on the way and making a forced march toward the capital city. Thanks to this, we managed to avoid a second bandit attack, even though we did face assaults from monsters.

Another reason we didn't stop in towns was the presence of the fairy on the carriage. Stopping in a town with the fairy aboard might have caused unnecessary trouble, and above all, the fairy possessed such healing power. If I could bring the fairy to the capital city, perhaps it could help heal my mother's illness. That was the calculation.

The fairy hadn't descended from the carriage roof. Considering our first encounter, I speculated that maybe she intended to remain hidden. Therefore, we all pretended not to notice her. Though I couldn't observe her from the ground, as she remained atop the carriage, she continued to emit particles of light, indicating that she was still there.

After a three-day forced march, we finally reached the capital city with the fairy. What appeared as a dull, gray cityscape before departing now still had relatively few people but was bathed in the sunset's glow. It was as if the capital city had finally awoken from a

long slumber.

However, the distant royal castle still retained a sinking atmosphere. No, this is...

I had a clear realization of the source of the unease I had felt throughout the journey since meeting the fairy.

The area ahead was lifeless, while the surroundings around us and behind were vibrant.

It wasn't that we were returning from decline; it was that the places we passed through were changing color. Or perhaps it was the places the fairy had passed through.

I can't provide a specific explanation of what exactly changed, but I could distinctly feel an improvement in the overall atmosphere of the places we passed through. Although I hadn't paid much attention to the front while looking out of the carriage window, if I had, I might have noticed that the areas we passed through were lacking vitality before we arrived, and the vitality increased as we got closer.

The scenery beside the carriage I had observed from the window had already shifted to the vibrant version.

As we walked along the corridors of the royal castle with a maid, my thoughts were still on the fairy. Suddenly, my brother appeared.

"Big brother!"

"Hey now, you should be calling me 'Your Highness' in public, remember?"

"Ah... I apologize."

I turned red in embarrassment.

There stood my elder brother, the first prince and also the crown prince.

He was supposed to be in the southern region. I thought his return would take longer, so I never expected him to be back before me.

“Welcome back, Tires. How was it?”

“...I couldn’t accomplish anything. Mother’s treatment was declined, and regarding food aid, they demanded an exorbitant amount that’s simply impossible...”

I answered, avoiding eye contact. I couldn’t look directly at my brother’s face.

“I can’t make a decision on such a substantial amount on my own. I requested some time to consult the country before giving an answer, but even that was denied. I was practically pushed out and forced to return in that situation.”

“I see... That must have been tough. To think that a child like you, who’s only ten, would have to go through such hardships. I’m sorry.”

“Oh, no... But even though they’re a friendly nation, I didn’t expect such a cold reception. Perhaps someone like me, a child, is underestimated in matters of diplomacy.”

Recalling the treatment in the neighboring nation, my mood continued to plummet.

“By the way, how did things go on your end?”

“I can’t say it went well either. There was no progress with the treatment. While I managed to secure food aid, it’s not nearly enough.”

The south is separated by a high mountain range. It seems they had little interest in what's on this side of the mountains.

The south is mainly influenced by the "Tower" faction, after all...

In the country's sky, there's a massive white "bridge." It's visible even from the surrounding nations, and those countries that refer to it as the "Bridge" faction. However, from the southern countries, it appears as a "tower." Due to this, there's a significant cultural and religious difference, making any form of negotiation or even personal interactions through trade extremely difficult. Personally, I can't understand how anyone can see that massive "bridge" as a "tower," so I can't grasp the perspective of the southern countries.

"It seems the situation wasn't favorable in the south either... If only you had gone to Energia. There's a renowned mage there who might have been able to heal mother."

"Now, now, how many times have we discussed this?"

My brother said that with a wry smile.

"The road to the south is treacherous. It's separated by high mountains, and the roads are hardly maintained. There are even more monsters there than in the west. It's far too dangerous for someone like you to go there, Tires."

Upon hearing that, I looked down again, biting my lip in frustration.

Suddenly, the castle interior erupted with noise. Guards were running around.

"What's happening!? What's going on?"

My brother stopped a guard running nearby and asked. The guard stiffened and replied.

"Hah! There have been reports of mysterious lights flying around the



castle interior. We're currently forming a capture team!"

Oh no, I should have informed the fairy beforehand.

How much of an incompetent am I? But there's no time for regret; that fairy might be the only way to save this country.

## Chapter 8 - Grand Pursuit

I had planned to spend the night somewhere suitable for sightseeing on the following day. However, it suddenly started to rain.

It's quite unfortunate that rain would fall on the eve of sightseeing, especially when it had been sunny all this time.

Hmm, I didn't consider rain at all. There's no way I can sleep outside in the rain.

But wait, I suddenly realized that the rain was passing through my body. I can become intangible. Surely, I can pass through the walls of the castle as well. The rain didn't make me wet as it passed through my body, but I still couldn't bring myself to spend the night outside in the rain.

I phased through the castle walls and entered inside. Yep, I can just pass through walls like this. I can go wherever I want.

I've seen various works in my previous life where people could pass through walls. I always wondered how things looked when you were inside a wall. I thought it would probably be pitch black during phasing. However, I could still see beyond the wall, and the other side was clearly visible. Hmmm, I murmured and focused on the wall I had just passed through. I could see the view beyond the wall. It seems that I can do more than just phase through, I can also perceive through objects.

Now that I think about it, even though I've become so small, I can still perceive things like cityscapes as if I were of normal size. My vision is not typical. It seems I am using not just light, but also some sort of mystical power to maintain my sight. But well, I don't need to dwell on it too much. It's problematic if I can't see, but as long as my vision works fine, there's no issue.

As I entered the castle, I found it surprisingly well-lit. There were evenly spaced lights along the corridors, illuminating the dim

passageways with a fantastical glow. I could sense magic; perhaps these were magical artifacts.

I had planned to start sightseeing the next day, but I realized that I could easily do some castle exploration now. I had used a combination of wall-phasing and movement to avoid getting caught by the maid who had seen me earlier.

Unfortunately, my reckless movements had caused me to be spotted by various people along the way. Soon after being spotted by a soldier-like person who seemed to be patrolling, the grand pursuit began.

Soldiers were chasing after me!

I zigzagged and phased through walls, trying to escape, but no matter where I went, soldiers were hot on my heels. It's astonishing how they manage to keep track of such a tiny me in this dimly lit castle. The maids were running after me as well. In my mind, the background music of a chaotic slapstick comedy was playing.

A net was thrown at me. Too bad! I can phase through objects, you know!

Oh, a magician!

Those robes! That staff! Magicians!

Three magicians appeared, an old man, an old man, and a young man, all in robes, rushing toward me. Maybe due to the confined space of the castle, they didn't seem to be casting any spells specifically. Although they were chasing me like the others, they seemed quite out of breath and lacking in stamina.

"Oi!"

They said something like "oi"! It's probably some official magical term or incantation.

However, the elderly man, who seemed quite advanced in age, cried out “oi” with a deadly serious expression. This combined with the eeriness of his delivery and the loudest scream I’ve heard throughout this whole ordeal left me startled and delayed in my evasion.

It seemed like their “oi” spell is a kind of barrier spell. My subconscious was telling me that this was a form of defensive magic. The magic circle shone in front of me, and I was moving pretty quickly. I forgot to phase through and ended up colliding with it. My phasing ability is an active skill, not passive. I have to consciously phase through; otherwise, I’ll collide.

I looked up to see the maid who had first noticed me approaching with a birdcage.

It seemed she had been sprinting all this time; she was drenched in sweat and breathing heavily.

When I saw the cage, I noticed that the middle section was slightly swollen. It was a stylish, antique-like, golden birdcage.

The door was adorned with another rainbow pattern. Maybe it’s a standard decoration for doors in this world. Small flowers, similar in material to the cage, were arranged at the top, resembling ivy, and larger flowers of the same material adorned the bottom. Lovely.

I pondered for a moment. Perhaps it’s better to let them catch me.

Given the massive commotion I’ve caused so far, and the fact that they’re attempting to capture me rather than kill me, I doubt they would just kill me right away. Thieves in the forest were killed instantly without any attempts to capture, so if they were planning to kill me, they would have done so from the start.

Upon closer thought, I could technically phase through the castle walls and escape outside, but the commotion has been too great. If I escape now and try to go sightseeing in the city tomorrow, I’ll just be chased by a bunch of soldiers.

Besides, there’s so much noise; the fairy must be quite rare. If a rare

fairy like me were to be fluttering around, nobles might fight over me. If they find out I'm under the royal family's protection, they might give up. After all, I must be the person who saved the princess's life. I made eye contact with Silver-Haired-chan at that moment. If I plead with teary eyes, there's a fairly high chance I could become Silver-Haired-chan's pet. I'm a loyal pet of the royal family! Bark,

bark!

Without resisting, I allowed the approaching maid to place me inside the birdcage.

## Chapter 9 - Rain

On that night, the long-awaited heavy rain finally began to fall.

As a serving maid, I hurried down the corridor to report the rain's arrival to the head maid.

Just then, a sphere of light suddenly burst out from the wall in front of me.

“Y-You, a fairy!?”

My eyes widened in astonishment. The dimly lit corridor made it hard to see clearly, but the object that floated before me resembled a fairy straight out of a picture book.

The fairy-like sphere of light noticed me and darted away in an instant.

With the news to report, I hastened to the head maid's side. As we prepared a cage, the commotion within the castle grew.

It seemed that the fairy-like sphere of light had been flying around the castle, causing the guards to be in an uproar.

It was inevitable that it would be discovered everywhere given how brightly it shone. People were everywhere, running around. Even guards, knights, and mages who normally wouldn't be caught dead running in the castle were swept up in the frenzy. The scene resembled a chaotic comedy of errors, where everyone, from high-ranking officials to lowly servants, was running around. To emphasize, the light ball wasn't confined to the floor or walls; it moved through ceilings and walls as well, up and down.

“Ojaa!!”

A distant shout from the magician's leader resounded. It seemed they had used some kind of magic. The magician's leader, despite her advanced age, was known for not directly engaging in battles anymore. Nevertheless, she could cast a wide range of spells without chanting, and her voice was distinctive enough that even from a distance, one could tell it was her.

Taking a deep breath, I made my way toward the scene where the light ball... or rather, the fairy, had fallen to the ground.

Perhaps due to the effects of the magician's magic, the fairy was in a dazed state. It seemed to be recovering from confusion. Amidst the crowd's anticipation, I cautiously approached and managed to capture the fairy in a cage before it fully regained its composure.

"Wait! You there! Release the fairy immediately!"

Princess Tires, accompanied by Crown Prince Arland, came running toward us. It was the first time I had seen Princess Tires run so energetically. Despite having just captured the fairy... or rather, the fairy-sama, I couldn't oppose the princess's orders. I opened the cage door and lifted the cage slightly, orienting it away from me so that the fairy-sama could easily exit.

... However, the fairy-sama didn't come out of the cage even after waiting for a while. It was on its knees, repeatedly nodding its head as if trying to convey something.

"Princess, it seems the fairy-sama can't come out. What should we do?"

...

Without saying a word, Princess Tires approached the fairy-sama with her index finger. The fairy-sama responded by placing its right hand on Princess Tires's finger. It gazed intently at her face.

Princess Tires didn't seem to fully understand the fairy-sama's intentions either, as she tilted her head. In that moment, her finger

moved slightly, and the fairy-sama quickly withdrew its right hand and placed its left hand on her finger.

Perhaps finding the atmosphere too stifling, many people started leaving the area. The guards and servants who had abandoned their posts earlier retreated. Only a few guards, officials, three curious magicians, myself and the head maid, Princess Tires, and Crown Prince Arland remained.

“The fairy-sama saved my life. Moreover, it might be the savior of our kingdom. Treat it with utmost respect.”

“Tires, what do you mean?”

Crown Prince Arland asked Princess Tires.

“I sent a brief message ahead, but since I just returned, the official report was delayed. You’re aware of the attack by bandits on our way here, aren’t you? Well, during that incident, our guards were overwhelmed and cornered to the point of defeat.”

“What? But I haven’t heard any reports of guards being injured.”

“Yes, injuries were healed by the fairy-sama. But that’s not all. The fairy-sama strengthened our guards and contributed to defeating the bandits. Furthermore, it restored the fields and farmlands from the western forest all the way to the capital!”

“Restored the farmlands? If that’s true, then our food shortage problem could be solved overnight!”

Crown Prince Arland’s expression shifted from surprise to fervor.

“Indeed, if the fairy-sama’s contributions are considered, it’s highly possible. The fairy-sama seemed to sense our worries, bringing rain to us.”



“I see... I see! You did well, Tires! What’s this about ‘it’s no use’? This is an incredible achievement! This could alleviate our burdens!”

“Thank you. Also, I’d like to take the fairy-sama to see Mother. The fairy-sama possesses the power of healing. I believe it can cure Mother’s illness.”

“Ah, that’s a great idea.”

In response to Crown Prince Arland’s approval, the magician’s leader, who had been silently observing, offered her opinion.

“Let’s not rush things. It’s already late tonight, and luckily the queen’s condition isn’t so dire that it would worsen in a day or two. The princess has just returned as well. For now, let’s have a good rest tonight and decide tomorrow. The princess can’t visit the sickbed at this hour, can she?”

...

“... You’re right. The conditions are indeed not dire enough to warrant a late-night visit. I was a bit impatient. Certainly, it would be inappropriate to visit the queen’s sickbed at this hour.”

“Alright, then tomorrow we’ll take the fairy-sama to see Mother. I’ll adjust the schedule on my end.”

“Please, my dear brother.”

Finally, it seemed that an end was in sight for this commotion...

By the way, could I lower the cage now? My arm was trembling, having held the cage aloft for too long.

## Chapter 10 - Dogs and Tea

As soon as I was placed inside the birdcage, the silver-haired girl came running over. After some commotion, the maid opened the door of the birdcage and then lifted the cage up to about chest height.

What's going on here? The birdcage is being offered to the silver-haired girl. Is it that? A time for pets to appeal to their masters? I can't stay like this. I struck a cute pose to appeal my obedience to the fullest. I stared at the silver-haired girl and activated my teary-eyed attack. Should I lie down on my back for a more submissive look?

The silver-haired girl pointed her finger at me. I know this! Shake hands! I enthusiastically placed my right hand on the silver-haired girl's finger.

How's this... did it get across? My heartfelt pet appeal. Not many creatures are as faithful as a dog, woof woof. The people around us were watching with bated breath.

She tilted her head! Isn't it getting through!? Wait a minute. I was so confident that I was cute, but come to think of it, I don't know what my face looks like. Am I ugly? No, wait, calm down. Even if I'm not pretty, I should aim for the cute and chubby frame. Don't give up.

The silver-haired girl's finger moved slightly to the left. I understand! It's another round, right?

I immediately placed my left hand on her finger.

A moment of silence. I waited for the verdict...

Then, the people who had gathered around began to leave one by one. What kind of judgment is this? Success? Failure?

The silver-haired brother and the magic-using uncle separated, and

the silver-haired girl and the birdcage maid, along with a few other maids, moved to a room that was luxurious yet modest in an oddly harmonious way.

Throughout the conversation in the hallway on the way to this room, the word “Asherella” came up frequently. Ah, I see, they must have been discussing a name for a pet! Most likely, they were deciding on a name for me, their new pet. When they addressed me, the word “Asherella” often appeared at the beginning of their sentences. Surely, my name had been decided as Asherella. I had acquired the status of a royal pet. It’s practically a guarantee of a secure future.

By the way, this birdcage has a fluffy cushion on the bottom that’s quite comfortable. It’s not a traditional Japanese-style cushion since it’s not in a Japanese setting, but rather a Western-style cushion. What do they call these?

There’s a perch hanging from the top. If a small bird were in this cage, it would look cute perched on the stylish hoop. But since I’m inside, it looks more like a noose for hanging. I should remove that later.

The birdcage maid placed the cage on the table. Rather than just placing it on the table, she hooked it onto a hanger on the stand. It’s probably a special hanger designed for this cage, made from the same material and adorned with similar decorations, creating a matching ambiance.

It’s swaying. If I move a little, the cage sways... It might have been easier to just put the birdcage on the table. But then again, this is a royal pet. Perhaps they require a touch of grandeur. I, as a loyal royal pet, must accept it with grace.

As I was pondering this, the birdcage maid brewed two cups of tea. One was placed in front of the silver-haired girl, and the other... wait, is this for me? They’re calling me Asherella, so it must be mine.

Finally! Finally, I can have some sweetness! Hurray! I flew over to the tea cup on the table.

But here's the problem. It's huge, this tea cup... How am I supposed to drink from it? Presumably, they've prepared a small cup considering my size. It's a white porcelain cup with a small gold border, quite small compared to human-sized cups. It even has a handle, but I can levitate objects... ah, I can lift it! I'm amazing.

Alright, alright, now I can finally drink—wait a minute. If I tilt it like this, it'll turn into a waterfall! I'll probably end up drenched in tea. Phew, I'm glad I noticed.

I realized that if I tilted the tea cup like that, it would turn into a waterfall. It's fortunate I noticed.

So I made myself a small tea cup and scooped tea out of the human-sized cup.

Huh? I unconsciously made this tea cup? It seems I can create various things. Well, well, it's not important now. What's important is the tea.

With the creation of a cup that matched my size, I finally managed to have some tea.

But when I tried to tip the tea cup normally, no tea came out. Instead, the cup just became a sphere. What is this? Is it surface tension or something? Oh, you cheeky laws of physics, how far will you mock me? Reluctantly, I lowered my face into the tea cup, put my lips to the tea, and began sucking it up.

Hot! No, no, no, no, the tea is hot when you put your face in it! The silver-haired girl and the maids were smiling wryly with disappointed looks. If there were social media in this world, I might have been spread as a dumb pet. Thank goodness, there's no social media, right?

Later, I was stripped of my clothes and measured. What's this? They're going to make clothes for me too? Truly befitting of a royal family, they even prepare clothes for their pets.

In the end, I spent the day without being able to drink the tea.

# Chapter 11 - Underground Waterway

When I woke up in the morning, the rain was still falling steadily. Hmm, it's really pouring out there.

Last night, after being measured, Silver-haired-chan left the room, and everyone else disappeared along with her, except for the Cage Maid. It seems like the Cage Maid is in charge of taking care of me. She has been tending to me for a while, making sure I'm comfortable. She took away the mysterious teacup I made when tidying up the tea set, but I wonder if she'll still use that to serve me tea in the future. Not that I can drink it, though.

The rain is coming down heavily, and although my sense of time is a bit distorted due to the rain, I think it's still early in the morning. There's a door in addition to the one leading to the corridor, connecting to an adjacent room which seems to be some sort of antechamber. Cage Maid remained in that adjoining room after last night and hasn't returned.

The door to the cage I'm in is left open. Even if the door is closed, I can still pass through it, but if it's left open, I can go out. That means I have the freedom to move around. It's more like treating me as a cat than a dog. Being allowed to move freely also means I can go sightseeing outside the castle, despite the rain.

So, what should I do? I take a look around the castle's surroundings. There are decorative dragon mouths at various points around the castle, from which rainwater is being drained. Like a Merlion. Are these rain gutters?

Out of curiosity, I decide to follow the drainage path. Rainwater flows from the roofs through gutters, gradually descending until it eventually drips down onto the ground. It's like a giant version of those funnels in onsen baths.

There are stone slabs in the ground where the water drips down, probably to prevent the grass from being eroded by the continuous

drops. These stones have been slightly concaved by the water's erosion over time. Judging by the extent of the erosion, this castle has quite a history.

I continue following the drainage path, and it leads me to a cobblestone road that seems wide enough for a carriage. The road has a slightly raised center and gutters on both sides, demonstrating its design for proper drainage.

As I follow along, the waterways merge and the path grows wider. The cultural level of this world is more impressive than I initially thought. Perhaps due to the presence of magic.

As I move forward, I encounter iron grates that serve as barriers. Originally, you would need a key to proceed, but it seems like someone has severed the grates and created openings large enough for a person to pass through. The edges

where the grates used to be attached are relatively new; someone must have been here recently. Cutting through a barrier and trespassing like this doesn't seem like a legitimate approach. I wonder if this place is used as a shelter by vagrants or something.

Unconcerned, I continue on. The sense of malevolence in the atmosphere seems to be growing stronger. Approaching cautiously, I find a large sack tied up and submerged in the water. It's about the size that an adult human could carry on their back.

I check the map and realize that I'm near the center of the town. I don't really understand what's going on, but I can tell that whatever is inside the sack isn't good. Maybe there's a reason for it being here, but without the means to communicate, I can't ask for permission. So, I decide to purify the sack on my own. I believe this is the right thing to do, not the wrong thing. Hopefully, I won't get scolded for this.

Hmm, I've been exploring for quite a while. I've ended up in quite a maze-like structure. However, I don't need to worry about getting lost. As I consult the map, I realize that the underground waterway is connected to the castle as well. I decide to return to the castle via the underground waterway.

On my way to the castle, the atmosphere of the passage suddenly changes drastically. The underground waterway I've been traversing—let's be honest, it's a sewer—gives way to an older, less dirty underground passage. It seems like this passage was forcefully connected to the original underground waterway. The area where the walls were broken is still relatively clean. This must have been connected recently. I don't fully understand the situation, but as long as I can pass through, it's fine by me. I continue on to the castle.

The end of the passage proves to be a dead end. I pass through the wall and re-enter the castle through my ability to translocate. Is this a secret door? I've come out into the castle's basement, so I head upwards. I'm avoiding the winding corridors and taking a more direct route through the ceiling. Along the way, I encounter a few surprised individuals who were taken aback by my sudden appearance. But hey, I'm the royal pet, so there shouldn't be any complaints.

Even though my body has been purified, being in the underground waterway, which I assume to be the sewer, still makes me feel somewhat uncomfortable. Recalling the layout of the castle after yesterday's great chase, I search for a bath. With the level of civilization here being as advanced as it is, surely they have baths in the castle.

After a bit of hopping around, I finally find the bath. It's spacious, circular, and even has a small fountain in the center.

The taps and other fixtures are all golden. There are taps here? So, not only do they have a sewer system, but also a proper water supply system? Impressive. Or maybe it's just for the castle?

Unfortunately, at the moment, the fountain isn't running, and there's no water in the bath. I create warm water with magic and fill the tub. As for my clothes, I wonder where I should put them. Oh well, just leaving them by the side is probably fine. Hooray, bath time! I leap in.

Oh no, I've ended up filling the tub with too much water. This depth might be perfect for a human, but it's too deep for a fairy like me. My feet can't reach the bottom. So, I start swimming. As I swim, I realize that I have wings. I move my wings like I'm doing the butterfly stroke.



Splish splash! Hahaha! This is even faster than the crawl! I can swim at an incredible speed!

However, it seems that the sound of water splashing at high speed has attracted Silver-haired-chan and the maids, who rush over with alarmed expressions. Startled, I quickly grab my clothes and flee from the scene...

# Chapter 12 - Sanctuary

What a situation! I clenched my teeth.

Last night, everything was calm and peaceful. I had let my guard down.

After discussing with my older brother, we decided to make the maid who had trapped the fairy in the cage into a personal attendant for the fairy. A dedicated attendant. It happened by chance, but she was originally from a neutral family and was serving as a manner trainee. Given that we didn't want the fairy to be deeply involved with any faction at the moment, it was a suitable solution.

This fairy attendant hurriedly came to me early in the morning with an alarmed expression.

She reported that the fairy was already missing when she checked this morning.

Today was the day we planned to take the fairy to Mother to help heal her illness! I instructed a search for the fairy and shared the information with my brother.

Through inquiries made by the maids, it became apparent that the fairy had managed to slip outside. The gatekeeper of the inner gate and a few of the outer guards had witnessed it.

However, due to the rain and the circumstances, there weren't many eyewitnesses.

The discussion turned to the possibility that the fairy might have headed towards the noble district or the commoners'

district. A search party was formed. As many knights as possible from the Second Knight Order were dispatched, and they set out to search the city.

Even after noon, we still hadn't managed to trace the fairy's whereabouts. Reports came in that several suspicious individuals had been captured as a result of sending numerous knights into the city, but such minor matters were of little consequence now. If it had to come to this, we should have taken the fairy to Mother last night. Even though royals are taught not to regret their decisions, I can't help but feel regretful now.

It hadn't rained as properly in the capital for years, leading to crop failures. But today, the first real rain in years, and the townspeople were apparently making a fuss about it. Under these circumstances, conducting a discreet search for the fairy in the city is turning out to be more challenging than I anticipated.

While dealing with this, we suddenly received eyewitness accounts of the fairy within the castle. Apparently, the fairy had risen from the floor unexpectedly. Had she returned? I immediately recalled the knights and instructed them, along with available maids, to search the castle. I also went to search for her. I thought we would locate her quickly, but it seems the fairy is once again darting around the castle. The extent of the distance between each sighting location and the previous one leaves me feeling dizzy, considering the illogical movements she must be making.

Finally capturing her again, I find the fairy in the bath, producing incredibly high splashes as she swims at an unbelievable speed. Both myself and the maid are left speechless by this absurd spectacle, and we are taken off guard. The fairy escapes from us once more.

What a situation, I'm back to square one again! Argh! That cursed fairy!!

"Big brother! I can't take this anymore! I can't!"

I instinctively cling to my brother, who had come to check on me.

"There, there, calm down, Tires. But more importantly, why is the bath glowing like that? What's going on?"

“Huh?”

He points out the bath, and I take a closer look. He’s right, it’s glowing.

“I don’t know. The fairy was in this bath just a while ago.”

“I see. Well, let’s have the Chief Magician investigate.”

“Th-this is...!”

After a while, the Chief Magician, who had been called in, showed a look of astonishment as soon as he saw the bath.

“I must say, this is quite astonishing. This bath seems to be infused with a powerful healing power. It’s almost like holy water, a sanctuary of sorts!”

Upon his words, everyone present in the room erupted in a commotion.

# Chapter 13 - Second Knight Order

“I apologize for summoning you while you’re tired.”

I was called by the Commander of the Second Knight Order.

I am slightly larger in stature than the average knight, but the Commander of the order has an average build. However, his sharp gaze and bearded face exude the aura of a battle-hardened warrior, despite him being in his early thirties.

“No need to apologize, there are several things I need to report.”

“I’ve heard the general details. It must have been tough – returning from guarding the First Princess, only to be caught up in a commotion involving bandits. Then, waking up the next morning to search for the fairy in the rain. It’s been quite an eventful time.”

Until the day before, I had been serving as the head of the escort squad for Her Highness the First Princess during her visit to a neighboring country.

Normally, the elite Royal Guards would accompany royal members on their travels. However, this time, both the First Prince and the First Princess had separately visited different neighboring countries.

The path of the First Prince’s journey involved dangerous mountains with plenty of fierce monsters, along with less-than-friendly nations to the south after passing through those mountains.

On the other hand, the path of the First Princess was relatively safe and led to friendly countries. Thus, the Royal Guards were assigned to accompany the First Prince, while we were selected from the Second Knight Order to be the guards for the First Princess.

However, during the seemingly safe return journey, we were

ambushed by unusually powerful bandits.

“So, this is the sword of those bandits?”

“Yes. It’s oddly high-quality, which caught my attention. Their attire and armor were rough, typical of bandits, but their weapons were like this.”

“Indeed, this sword seems too high-quality for ordinary bandits. It’s unnatural for them to fall to banditry due to food shortages. If they had this many swords, they could’ve sold them for a fortune.”

“That’s not all. They were enveloped in magic power. It’s not something amateurs would be capable of.”

“I’ve heard your report. It’s true, ordinary individuals couldn’t have undergone physical enhancement training without proper guidance. Who do you think they are?”

“Their stances and attacking techniques were all different, so I can’t make a clear judgment based on that. However, given the current situation, I suspect the Empire might be involved.”

The Empire refers to the neighboring Zaldia Empire to the east. Until a few years ago, we were in a state of war with them. The war had lasted for five years, leaving both our kingdom and the Empire exhausted. Currently, we’re in a ceasefire, not a peace agreement. This is why the Second Prince leads the Border Security Division, keeping an eye on the empire’s activities.

“Indeed, it’s possible. But we lack concrete evidence. So, you were also aided by that fairy during that incident?”

“Yes. In an instant, everyone, including someone who was heavily injured, was healed. Moreover, they applied enhancement magic stronger than the magic carried by the bandits.”

“I see. Is that enhancement still in effect?”

“No, it’s worn off. However, since then, everyone, including the other members, has been in exceptionally good condition.”

“Indeed, I’ve heard as much.”

“We needed to return to the capital as soon as possible, but Her Highness the Princess is not accustomed to expeditions.

Although it was necessary for us to return quickly, she ordered us to return with such haste that we nearly exhausted our horses... yet, instead of becoming fatigued, the horses seemed to be in even better shape than usual.”

“I understand. Reports have also come in from the West Gate. The gatekeepers who were within a certain range of the fairy’s presence had their old injuries healed.”

“Could it be... When we passed through the West Gate? At that time, we only passed through without anything unusual happening. The fairy even peeked out from the carriage, but there was no indication that she did anything.”

“However, we have received reports. Just by approaching the fairy, old injuries were healed. It’s understandable that you and your comrades felt better, and even the horses’ conditions improved.”

“Sigh... That’s true. Princess was quite interested as well. However, I believe the focus should be on the bandits in this case.”

“That might be the case. During today’s search for the fairy in the city, we managed to apprehend suspicious individuals who seem to be affiliated with the Empire. They might be even more deeply involved than we thought.”

In the previous war, the Empire had also suffered heavy losses. Our

kingdom has friendly nations to the west, separated from us by high mountains, while the nations to the south have shown no interest due to their cultural differences.

Additionally, we're bordered by the sea to the north. As long as we pay attention to the Empire, everything should be fine.

However, the Empire can't afford such a luxury. All their hostile nations are on the opposite side, so if they attack us carelessly, they'd be vulnerable from behind. Thus, they wouldn't overtly attack us.

I used to believe that, but it's possible that they're making various moves behind the scenes. Moves we're unaware of...



# Chapter 14 - Fruit Tree

After escaping from the bathtub, I quickly put on some clothes.

Oh no, she was quite angry, wasn't she? Maybe it wasn't a good idea to fill the bathtub without permission. I need to prepare some sort of apology gift, or I might end up being abandoned on just my second day as a pet.

But there's no need to worry. I, as a fairy with cheat-like abilities, have come up with a fantastic idea that can benefit both me and everyone else. I still felt regretful for not being able to taste something sweet yesterday. However, I'm not just some entity being provided for—I'm a fairy who can think and act. If there's no sweet taste to enjoy, then I can create it myself.

When you think of fairies, you think of forests, flowers, and fruits. Yes, fruits! I'll grow delicious, sweet fruits that both I and everyone else can enjoy. I searched for a suitable location to plant fruit trees, one that is conducive to their growth and won't cause trouble for the castle inhabitants.

First, the back garden of the castle was out. It's impeccably landscaped with perfectly maintained plantings. If I were a gardener, I'd be furious if a haphazardly grown tree suddenly sprouted in this symmetrically arranged geometric garden. It might even be a disaster that warrants firing. The square in front of the main entrance is also unsuitable because it's paved with stone and unfit for planting trees.

It's also too far from my assigned room, making it inconvenient to travel to and from. So, I need somewhere nearby. The castle's layout forms a U-shape, with the main entrance facing south. There's a large garden on the north side. My room is located on the right side of the U, to the left as you face the main entrance, and on the west side.

I focused on the western side of the castle, searching for a location that was inconspicuous, looked unattended, had good sunlight, and wasn't paved with stones.

On the west side of the castle, there's a slightly smaller building adjacent to it, connected by a covered walkway. The building has the same architectural style as the main castle, suggesting it's a separate wing. Beyond that, at a bit of a distance and with a different style, there's another building. In front of that building is a square where some knight-like individuals were present. That different-styled building might be the quarters for the knights.

The nearby annex to the castle has a peculiar shape. If you deviate from the covered walkway connected to the castle and go deeper inside, you'll notice that it ends in a dead end. This area is unpaved and overgrown with weeds. These wild, overgrown plants indicate that this area is not cared for like a garden.

Hmm, well, while the sunlight might be a little lacking, it's a good environment for plants to grow considering how wild the weeds are. It's not likely to attract attention, and I doubt anyone would say anything if a couple of trees sprouted here.

I decided to plant fruit trees here.

Now, what kind of trees should I go for? They should be sweet and delicious, of course, and easy for me-sized creatures to eat while still providing satisfying portions for humans. Time to start nurturing these trees!

The sprouts are starting to grow—good, good.

They'll be watered by the rain, and now, what else do they need? Nothing else came to mind, so I offered a prayer. May they grow delicious... grow delicious... The sprouts continued to extend upward, surpassing my height and growing to the size of a human's waist.

Hmm, it won't be ready for harvest immediately. Let's call it a day for now. I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of fruits they'll bear.

I returned to my room and began to modify the birdcage. First, I removed the wooden bars that were hanging inside like nooses. Then, since I wanted a blanket when I was sleeping in the birdcage

yesterday, I made a blanket that matched the Western-style cushion that was already there.

Lastly, I wasn't comfortable with the idea of being seen from the outside while I sleep, so I decided to cover the birdcage with a curtain. I prepared a thick, crimson-colored fabric that resembled the curtains on the stage of an elementary school gymnasium. It had a gold-thread embroidery along the edges that matched the ambiance of the birdcage and gave it a rather luxurious appearance. This way, it's suitable for a royal pet's dwelling.

As it was getting dark, I settled into my newly perfected birdcage for the night.

I hope it's sunny tomorrow...

# Chapter 15 - Curse

“Now, if your mother uses this bathwater, will her illness be healed?”

I ask the head of the mage guild.

“There’s a very good chance. The healing power in this bath is quite potent, so it’s not unreasonable to hope for improvement.”

As I gaze at the bath that has become a sacred site, the head mage responds with an enraptured expression. My body trembles; my mother might actually recover.

“Then let’s hurry and have your mother use the bath. Get everything ready.”

Explaining the situation to the fairy to heal my mother seemed like a longer process compared to having her use the bath that has become a sacred site. Even though the fairy has once again disappeared without a trace, looking at it from another angle, the situation has improved. We’ve been facing endless problems up to this point. In the presence of the fairy, we’ve suddenly glimpsed solutions to everything. It’s luxurious to wish for more. Despite being tossed around a bit, we are truly blessed.

“However, even if it rained, it’s quite troublesome to use up this much water in a time of scarcity.”

My brother’s expression becomes complex. Was the bath here drawing water from the reservoir? In recent years, due to water shortages, water from the reservoir has mostly been redirected to agriculture. The main bathhouse hasn’t been used for two years. I’m not familiar with agriculture, but judging from my brother’s reaction, it seems that using up the water required for one bath is quite significant.

But the chief maid denies that.

“No, it’s probably the fairy’s magic that produced this bathwater. I checked earlier, and the water level in the reservoir hasn’t gone down.”

“What?! So, even without rain, we could solve the water shortage this way! Truly, the fairy is miraculous!”

My brother suddenly beams. Indeed, with just one fairy, we can solve all the problems that have been afflicting the kingdom.

“Mother, it’s Tires. I’ve returned from the neighboring country Energia.”

I knock on my mother’s door and address her. However, there’s no response from my mother; instead, her personal maid opens the door.

Since returning from the neighboring country, a major search for the fairy took place immediately, followed by a continued search for the fairy today. This is the first time I’ve visited my mother’s room in a while. When I left, it was spring; now it’s already early summer.

“....!”

Upon entering the room, I’m left breathless, unable to even greet her. I had no idea her condition had deteriorated to this extent. Her once-beautiful face is now covered in scattered pink spots. This is an advanced stage of the disease. I remember that former prime minister had similar symptoms a few days before his passing. Though I can only see her face, there must be similar spots all over her body.

“Mother, how are you feeling?”

“I don’t have much time left. It’s good that I got to see you one last time.”

Oh no, Mother seems to have realized her impending death. Both my brother and I have likely reported the lack of progress in treatment. She used to have an imposing presence, but her voice now sounds as

soft as a bug's wing.

"I'm sorry for putting you through this during these times... I hope you can find happiness even if it's just for yourself. I know you've just returned and things must be tough... Maybe you could consider studying in Energia again?"

"Mother!"

I can't help but interrupt her.

"There's no need to worry anymore! Everything will be resolved! Your illness will definitely be cured!"

"Well, you don't have to push yourself too hard. This country is already..."

"No, that's not true. It's not like that. For now, let's have you use the bathwater."

"...What do you mean?"

Then, I had the maids carry my mother to the main bath and have her soak in it.

"My, my, my! What's all this commotion!?"

My mother's astonished yet joyful voice echoes through the hallway. Tears are welling up in my eyes. Just a moment ago, she could only make sounds as small as insects, but now her voice is so full and loud. She must be cured!

After a while, my mother emerges from the bath, her face glowing. She managed to walk out on her own this time, a stark contrast to when she was carried in by the maids. There are no pink spots on her face or arms anymore; her skin is as radiant as ever, if not more so.

“I heard that a fairy visited our country! I’d love to meet her. I’m sure she’s adorable, don’t you think?”

Right, my mother may have had a stern demeanor, but she had a soft spot for cute things. She’s beaming, eager to meet the fairy.

“Mother, congratulations on your swift recovery.”

“Congratulations, Your Highness.”

My brother and the head mage offer their congratulations. The head mage also acts as my mother’s physician. He seems genuinely overjoyed.

“You’ve all been inconvenienced by this. Arland, thank you for your efforts as an ambassador to the southern nation.

Head Mage, thank you for your constant care.”

“Your kind words are unnecessary. I am grateful for your help, Head Mage, though it doesn’t compare to...”

“Umm... is there something you wanted to say?”

One of the maids, who had been assisting my mother in the bath, hesitates to speak.

“What is it?”

“During her bath, it seemed like a dark mist flew out...”

“What?! Could that be a curse?”

It’s not my brother but the head mage who reacts to the maid’s statement. A curse? Could my mother’s condition not be an illness but a curse?

“What happened to that dark mist?”

“It seemed to fly off towards the west.”

“West? Not east?”

“Yes, west.”

“Excuse me, but can you please explain what’s going on?”

The conversation is getting confusing, so I voice my question.

“When a curse is lifted, its effects return to the caster. The maid saw the ‘black mist flying away,’ which likely means that the curse returned to the caster.”

“The curse returns to the caster? Is this some kind of reusable spell?”

“No, it’s not that. When a curse is lifted, the caster is affected by the curse in the same way. Right now, the person who cursed the queen should be experiencing the same symptoms as her.”

Considering the curse’s implications, the situation becomes serious, and our conversation ends. It’s likely best to gather relevant people later to discuss it in detail. My brother abruptly ends the conversation, warning me and the maids to keep this secret.

With the curse matter causing a sense of urgency, the meeting ends. My mother had wanted to meet the fairy until the end, but since the fairy’s whereabouts are unknown, there’s nothing we can do. To be safe, I decide to check the room where the fairy was kept last night.

The fairy is sleeping soundly in the birdcage.

Ugh... After making everyone worried, making it seem like she



disappeared, she's just sleeping in the same place...

No, the fairy is our savior. The fairy is our savior. The fairy is our savior... \*sigh\*... Okay.

I struggle to calm my racing heart and leave the room. I'll introduce her to my mother another time; right now, I might get irritated.

## **Chapter 16 - Tea Party (Formal)**

When I woke up, there was an unfamiliar lady there.

It was a close-up shot of a beautiful and elegant lady's face right in front of me.

It seems I was carried here in the cage while I was sleeping. Through the gap between the curtain covering the cage and the close-up lady's face, I realized that this was not the room I had been sleeping in.

The close-up lady seemed to be in a very good mood. She had been excited and cheerful for a while now. The curtain covering the cage was opened. Silver-haired girl was here too. The one who opened the curtain was a cage maid. There were a few other maids as well, and there were tea cups and cookies on the table. Is this a tea party?

Everyone seemed to be in a good mood. That's a relief, it seems the bath incident was forgiven.

The close-up lady had silver hair, and she resembled the silver-haired girl a lot. Could she be their mother? If the silver-haired girl is the princess, then the close-up lady must be the queen. If she's the queen, she must be putting a lot of effort into taking care of her skin. Her skin is so radiant. The blonde-haired older brother was a young man, so I think she must be of considerable age, yet she looks so youthful. Impressive.

It's not a bad idea to flatter and please the strong and important ones. If it helps improve my treatment, I'll do it as much as needed. I gave the close-up lady a big smile! She looked happy! Well, she's quite easy

to handle, this “Close-up Easy Queen”.

The silver-haired girl had a somewhat complicated expression.

Hehehe, she's feeling jealous, I get it. It's natural to feel complicated when the pet that you thought was closest to you at home turns out to be even more attached to your mom. But it can't be helped, it really can't be helped. It's all for my future treatment.

After that, the conversation revolved around the close-up lady, and the members present were having a lively discussion.

The close-up lady had already moved her face away from the cage and wasn't a close-up anymore, but once a nickname like that sticks, it's hard to change.

The close-up lady was asking me various questions, but I didn't understand anything other than being called by my name.

But I was more interested in the cookies on the table. I don't care much for tea, it's hard to drink.

Maybe my desire for treats got through, because the close-up lady pushed a plate of cookies towards me. That must mean it's okay to eat, yay! I came out of the cage and pounced on the cookies.

Thick... it's really thick.

The human-sized cookie was as thick as a multi-layered hamburger for me. It's probably thicker than a quadruple after doubling or tripling. But well, if I open my mouth really wide, it's not unreachable. Look at the size of my mouth. I bit into the cookie.

Crunch

It's hard! This isn't working, I can't bite through it. I reluctantly crumbled the edge of the cookie, making it smaller, and decided to eat the pieces.

Hm, it's not as sweet as I thought it would be? And it's hard too. Is this how things are in this world, or is the royal family here health-conscious? Either way, I felt a bit disappointed because I was craving something sweet. I'll have to make sure to eat some fruits soon...

Meanwhile, the close-up lady was saying a lot of things, and the silver-haired girl remained quiet.

After a while, the gathering came to an end, and I was returned to my original room. The silver-haired girl and the cage maid were both looking at me. ... Why?

Feeling awkward, I decided to go out for sightseeing again today. I felt like I heard a voice from behind, but it would be even more awkward if I went back now.

Now then, where should I go today? I looked outside, the rain had stopped, but the ground was still wet. Let's go explore the castle again, I took out the map. There must be one because it's a castle. Yes, the treasure vault!

# Chapter 17 - Thoughts

Following the instructions given since last night, the fairy attendant brought the cage into the salon.

For the sake of Mother, who wanted to meet the fairy, we decided to hold a small tea party. Mother, who had been ill...

no, cursed, since last winter, hadn't hosted a tea party since the social season of the previous year. With the prospect of meeting the admired fairy, she was filled with anticipation despite it being a small gathering.

However, the fairy's actions are unpredictable. We never know when she might disappear again. So, while the fairy was still asleep, we had the salon set up for the tea party and moved the cage there. Thus, the tea party was held in the early morning, an unusual time for such an event.

"Oh my! My, my! So this is the fairy!"

Mother peered into the cage, delight evident on her face. The melting expression she displayed was a far cry from her usual stern visage with her sharp eyes and dignified posture. The contrast was stark.

"Oh dear! You're awake! You're lovely even when you're asleep or awake! May I remove this cloth?"

In response to her words, I glanced at the fairy attendant and signaled for her to open the cage's cloth cover.

"Hehehe, now I can see the entire body. The wings are so beautiful. They glisten with seven colors when hit by sunlight.

The particles of light surrounding her make her exceptionally gorgeous. Even the most exquisite picture books pale in comparison."

Mother had indeed regained her vitality. Not only was the curse lifted, but she also seemed visibly more youthful than before. Her skin was radiant, and even in her current state of adoring the fairy like a child, there was an alluring charm about her.

“Tires! The fairy is laughing! How adorable!”

“Mother, please be a bit more composed.”

“Oh, she’s a fairy, you know? Isn’t it delightful, Tires? You’re not excited?”

Mother directed a slightly dissatisfied gaze at me.

“Of course, I’m delighted. Your curse has been lifted, and it seems that various other issues troubling the kingdom might also find resolution.”

“...No, that’s not what I mean. It’s a fairy, you know? A delicate fairy like the ones in storybooks. Not many have had the privilege of meeting a fairy. Do you have no admiration for such things?”

“...Admiration? You’re asking if I admire it?”

I’m not entirely sure what she’s asking.

“Sigh... I might have misjudged your upbringing a bit. A girl your age should naturally hold admiration for fairies, spirits, angels, and white horse princes that appear in tales. Have you never had such aspirations?”

“I see. But I have a duty to rebuild this kingdom that has been brought to the brink by war and famine. While I did read storybooks as part of my studies when I was younger, I’m no longer at an age where I can be enchanted by beings that appear in such tales.”

“I see... I see. You still have a long way to go. Even though you’re still

so young, I may have placed a heavy burden on you.”

For a moment, a slightly sad expression flitted across Mother’s face.

“Oh? The fairy seems to desire a cookie. Come now, go ahead and enjoy them to your heart’s content.”

With those words, Mother pushed the plate of cookies towards the fairy, who immediately pounced on them.

“Hehehe... seems like the cookie might be a tad too big for the fairy.”

The fairy seemed to give up on eating the cookie as a whole and began knocking and breaking the edges of it. She was reducing its size to make it more manageable.

“By the way, Tires, show a bit more respect for the fairy.”

Mother lightly scolded me.

“I... I do respect her.”

After being tossed around by the fairy for the past couple of days, I hesitated slightly before answering.

“That’s right. I did warn you. And after all, you were saved by her too.”

I understand. Since realizing that the fairy possesses the power to solve the kingdom’s problems, I’ve been viewing her as a tool. But in a situation like this, we must utilize whatever resources are available. Just a few days ago, it was clear that the kingdom might cease to exist.

No, that’s precisely why... Because it’s the fairy who might be able to resolve such a dire situation in one fell swoop, I should show her even

more respect. True, she's saved both Mother and me twice already.

After the tea party ended, I followed the fairy to her room.

I gazed at the fairy within the cage... everything has changed so much. I can't afford to miss this opportunity.

With that determination, the fairy suddenly disappeared again.

“Fairy!”

I stared blankly at where she had been, and in the blink of an eye, she was gone...

# Chapter 18 - Treasure Vault

I explored various areas and finally found the treasure vault. It was located beneath the castle. The underground structure of the castle had multiple layers, and the treasure vault was situated in the middle of them. By the way, the lowest level was connected to an underground waterway.

Two guards stood watch in front of the imposing doors at the end of a chilly corridor. Are they standing there all the time?

It's unlikely anyone would come here.

I proceeded using my ability to phase through walls, making sure not to be noticed. While in this phase, I could move through the walls. People in this world seem to have heightened perception for small things. Even in dimly lit corridors at night or amidst forest trees, they can spot someone as small as me. However, they probably won't find me if I'm within the walls.

Upon entering, it was pitch dark inside. I conjured a ball of light using magic to illuminate the surroundings.

It's quiet. Too quiet, to the point where I could hear ringing in my ears. There's a book near the entrance. Is this an inventory? I flipped through its pages to check the contents. It's rather perplexing.

Shelves were placed along the walls, displaying gemstones and ornaments. It wasn't the kind of ambiance I expected, where chests are placed around, and opening them reveals a trove of treasures. Rather, it felt more like a museum – things were displayed rather than stored. So, this treasure vault isn't just for storage, but it's designed to entertain external visitors? I wished there were grand treasure chests, but if they're not here, there's nothing I can do.

I perused the shelves with gemstones. Impressive, these gems are quite large. When looking at these high-end exhibits, I couldn't help but



think, “If my dress snags and I accidentally knock something over, I’d be in deep trouble with compensation payments!” I should be careful while exploring and not break anything. As a precaution, I explored the treasure vault while phased through the walls. This way, I won’t accidentally knock anything over.

In the center of the room, there was a pedestal with a crown resting on it. A crown? Don’t kings wear crowns? Is it fine for it to be here? Perhaps it’s a spare?

However, while the room had a decent size, it was overall disappointingly empty.

For example, look at this rack where a sword is propped up. There’s space for five swords, but there’s only one.

It’s a double-edged sword with an elongated hilt, designed to be wielded with one or both hands. The blade isn’t exceptionally wide. The golden guard has red gemstones embedded in it, making it quite an impressive sword. The blade isn’t inserted into the scabbard, and the scabbard lies beside the sword. Is this a ceremonial sword due to its ornate decorations?

This single sword is undoubtedly magnificent, yet the surroundings ruin the experience. I’m not fond of having things that don’t match. Things look best when they’re perfectly aligned. Was I a collector in my past life?

Alright, I’ll replenish the collection here.

Hmm, it’s better if they have a matching feel. While I’ll keep the same shape, making them entirely identical isn’t interesting. Let’s change the color of the gemstones on the guard. Red is already present, so let’s go with blue, green, yellow, and brown.

I gathered magical energy and compressed it to create a colorless transparent gemstone as the base. To add color, I infused it with the water attribute... there we go, a blue gemstone. I repeated the process to create green, yellow, and brown gemstones.

As for the swords, well, a fantasy vibe would be nice. Let's see...

...Alright.

I placed the newly created swords next to the original one. Yes, having things match does enhance the visual appeal. But now, the difference in magical energy between the original sword and my additions was quite noticeable, making it feel unbalanced. Oh well, the original sword is imbued with the fire attribute due to the red gemstone on the guard. Time to give my swords the same enchantment... and there we go, perfect!

Since there's nothing else to see here, it's time to head back. It's still morning, right? Even though it's pouring outside, I might visit the town.

# Chapter 19 - The Empire

“So, I heard the curse has been lifted, hasn’t it?”

I pointed out the minister of the second prince’s faction’s failure, but he remained unfazed, smirking all the while. His stout figure and leering gaze were quite repulsive.

In our esteemed Zardia Empire, a succession dispute was brewing beneath the surface. While the rightful heir should be our beloved Crown Prince, the second prince’s faction, unsatisfied with this prospect, aimed to gain an advantage by conquering the neighboring Falsian Kingdom and boasting of their military success in the succession battle.

However, our enemies weren’t limited to the neighboring kingdom alone. If the war with the kingdom were to be prolonged, we couldn’t predict what other nations might do. As such, the second prince’s faction was engaged in various covert operations within the kingdom. As part of this, they attempted to curse the queen to death, following a similar curse placed on the former prime minister, but the curse suddenly unraveled.

“Well, well... Marshal, I hear your attempt to assassinate the first princess also failed?”

The minister shifted the conversation with a smirk on his face.

“The assault on the princess wasn’t originally in the plan. It was your sudden instruction to carry it out that led to that response. And what’s with that tone? Weren’t we planning to allow the powerful magical creatures born from altered mana flows to attack her? Weren’t we planning to let those creatures do the job, since they emerge from those woods?”

I retorted. Even bandits have their limitations. I had to find adventurers who wouldn’t arouse suspicion, train them to a minimum standard, and send them on the mission. The failure of the princess’s

attack meant we were lacking the most useful individuals for our purposes.

“Failing in the attack and yet framing it as if we are at fault. Moreover, blaming fairies for the failure? Are you suggesting such a fairy tale as an excuse? Perhaps it’s about time you consider retiring, Your Excellency.”

“What are you talking about? Weren’t you the one boasting about altering mana flows with barriers to stop the rain, using gathered mana to create powerful magical creatures, and unleashing them upon the kingdom, causing both famine and magical creature catastrophe simultaneously? Instead of powerful magical creatures, there’s nothing new that emerged from that area. And the mana buildup has disappeared. And why is it even raining over there? Is the barrier even functioning?”

“That’s the thing, when we tried to investigate, the day after it started raining, most of our spies that were hidden there were caught.”

“Seems like you’re always a step behind. Are they sensing our moves? Have they detected us?”

If this guy fails before the war starts, it’s not a problem. But if we go into the war with incomplete successes and failures and then take time to conquer the kingdom, we’ll become a prime target for other nations, despite being in rival factions. I had no option but to gather evidence to ensure his downfall, regardless of the outcome.

“Well, well, we still have plenty of tricks up our sleeves.”

He responded smugly. His responses are never straightforward.

“To start with, we’ve stockpiled the potions in the neighboring countries, ensuring that whenever war breaks out, they won’t have the resources for proper healing.”

The exaggerated gestures and theatrics are annoying, but ensuring the

enemy can't heal properly during war is quite significant. There's no point in defeating them if they can heal infinitely.

"Furthermore, we've already gained control of the underground passages in the capital. We've secured a route directly from the underground waterways to the royal palace. We've also introduced a slow-acting poison into the waterways, so by summer, an epidemic will likely spread. By autumn, their strength should be considerably diminished."

"A bit tepid, don't you think? Isn't that underground waterway essentially a sewer? Why not introduce poison into their water supply?"

"Oh dear, don't you know? Almost all of their underground waterways are interconnected. By attacking one, we can impact the entire capital. On the other hand, their water supply is dispersed among storage tanks and reservoirs, so attacking one would only cause partial damage. Besides, we're causing water scarcity over there as well. Do we really need to attack their water supply anymore?"

"Hmph, I see."

"But that's not all. We'll incite a stampede near the capital."

"What? Hasn't that been discarded since we couldn't acquire that thing?"

A stampede, an outbreak of magical creatures. If it happens, there will be significant casualties. Normally, stampedes occur due to natural disasters like an overpopulation of magical creatures, leading to increased incidents. Inducing it artificially isn't simple.

"Well, well... considering that the curse failed this time as well, they might hand that thing over in response to our provocations."

"They have only two of those left, don't they? Will they really hand

them over?”

“No need to worry about that.”

“So, as planned, we’ll initiate the war during the Galm season in autumn?”

“Exactly. Everything is proceeding according to plan. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m quite busy.”

Damn it, so it seems we can’t avoid the war after all. If there was a chance of removing this minister from power before the war, I’d obstruct the plans. But if war is inevitable, cooperation is necessary.

I watched the minister’s rotund figure as he walked away.

However, the report on the cause of the first princess’s failed assassination mentioned fairies. I initially thought it was nonsense, but I still lacked detailed information. The mass apprehension of spies mentioned by the minister wasn’t a lie.

We’ve also lost a considerable number of our faction’s spies, making it challenging to gather information in the capital.

Nonetheless, the kingdom is already weakened, and we’ve added our own manipulations to the mix. There shouldn’t be any problems in taking it over; victory is almost guaranteed. The real challenge lies in how to oust the second prince’s faction after the victory.

## Chapter 20 - Start of Sightseeing

Leaving the treasure vault, I soared over the noble district and headed towards the town. I wanted to explore the regular parts of the town before the noble district.

The sky displayed a white rainbow, and the clouds billowed vertically. The clouds seemed unusually low, and it's been only two days since I last saw a white rainbow. It feels like a long time has passed since all the events that happened in the castle.

Two moons were visible in the sky. Each had a different phase of waxing and waning. One appeared nearly full, while the other was crescent-shaped. I wonder if having multiple moons around a planet makes their phases differ. Well, it's an alien world, and I can't really judge seasons from cloud patterns. Even though it looks like summer due to the cloud formation, I can't determine the current season. I can't even discern the latitude from the sun's position because of that.

Looking down, the town was truly vast. The town spread out from the castle, forming a semi-circle from west to east along the southern side. It had gates on the west, south, and east sides, but the north side was obscured by the castle. The southern side of the town's layout seemed to have been designed for sunlight exposure. Creating a town on the north side would likely be obstructed by the castle, resulting in a lack of sunlight.

A river could be seen from above. The river flowed just outside the eastern gate, and as a result, the eastern gate had a unique structure. The river acted as a natural moat with a drawbridge. Besides the gate, there were docks, specialized unloading areas for ships, and a gate for transferring cargo from ships into the town.

When I first saw the river, it seemed normal, but from above, the water level appeared much lower. That might make it difficult for larger ships to navigate. Currently, only small boats seemed to be moving, while larger vessels were all docked.

The southern gate was surprisingly large. It seemed that the main entrance to the town was the southern gate. A major road extended from the southern gate, and the second-largest roads extended from the eastern and western gates. These three main roads converged at a circular square, where a road leading to the castle branched off. Due to the town's fan-shaped layout, the main roads curved gently east and west.

I entered the town through the western gate. Along the main road of the western gate, there were mostly three-story buildings, while the southern gate's main road had many four-story buildings, and even some five-story ones.

At the point where the main roads converged, there was a circular square. Semi-circular buildings with pillars surrounded the square's east and west sides. In the center was a fountain, though it wasn't currently spewing water.

In front of the fountain stood a stone statue. Positioned with its back to the fountain, a male figure was depicted raising a sword. I approached the statue, noticing that despite its exposure to the elements, it wasn't as eroded as expected. Perhaps this world's lack of rain played a role, or maybe the statue was relatively new. It was a fine-looking statue of a hero or some prominent figure of this country. There was an inscription on a nearby stone tablet, but naturally, I couldn't understand what it said.

While there were barely any people around when I entered the town, it was now quite bustling. I suppose the reason for the sparse crowds earlier was because it was evening.

Three children ran towards me. As the esteemed pet of the royal family, I had no need to hide anymore. I observed the children with a calm demeanor. Being the revered pet of the royal family, it seemed my name had spread even to these children. "Asher, Asher," they chanted. I see, is Asher my nickname? My pet name?

Apparently, fairies are rare, as the children were ecstatic, hopping up and down. Wait, stop poking me with that stick.



After playing with the children for a while, a woman who seemed like a parent rushed over, her expression frantic. She must know not only about my name but also my status as a royal family pet. Well, if her children were reaching out to the royal family's pet, even raising a stick, of course she'd be alarmed. The youngest child was dragged away by what seemed to be his mother, and the remaining two children followed.

Alright, alright. Now I can continue my sightseeing. Let's see, what's interesting around here?

Oh, there it is! A sign with swords and shields! A weapons shop? Is it a weapons shop!? Yay! I eagerly rushed into the building with the "Swords and Shields" sign.

...Huh? It's not a weapons shop, is it? There's a counter, and a surprised-looking young woman behind it. On the opposite side, is it a food court or something?

Wait, this is... the adventurer's guild! I've arrived at the adventurer's guild!

# Chapter 21 - Adventurer's Guild

The rain triggered a series of events. The guild's reception work had been quite slow lately, but the rain brought in numerous requests, keeping me, the receptionist, incredibly busy.

Just a few days ago, the river's water level had dropped to the point where ships couldn't move. The guildmasters had been quite concerned, fearing the worst. However, just in the nick of time, rain finally came, allowing smaller boats to become operational again.

With the boats moving, the overland routes for delivering goods that arrived by ship were also activated. Since the stalled logistics were suddenly in motion, escort requests started pouring in.

"Alright, everyone, please form a line."

I attached request forms to the request board. Some medicinal herbs can only be harvested after rain, and there are plenty of requests suitable for lower-ranked adventurers who can't handle escort duties. Potions, in particular, are in short supply right now, so we need to step up our efforts.

Up until now, most of the requests were about defeating local monsters or bandits, but since adventurers are the ones who typically take up such tasks, monsters and bandits have stopped approaching the capital. While that's a good thing, the number of requests naturally decreased, leading to competition. If you're about three days away from the capital, you might still encounter some bandits.

But now, with the sudden influx of requests, adventurers are swarming in. It's a real chaotic situation.

"Coming through! Please make way!"

After attaching the request forms, I hurried back to the reception counter. The adventurers were still lining up, and the senior

receptionist was silently pressuring me to return quickly.

With the logistics moving, the guildmasters went to the Merchant's Guild for negotiations. The sub-masters went to the Alchemist's Guild. Currently, there are only a few of us receptionists and a male clerk at the guild counter.

In this situation, as I manned the reception counter, it suddenly appeared. A girl with wings, radiating light brighter than the midday sun. For a moment, I couldn't understand what was happening. I could see it with my eyes, but when something out of a fairy tale suddenly appears in front of you, anyone would react the same way. It was a fairy, but it took a moment for me to comprehend.

Ignoring my confusion, the fairy started fluttering around the guild. The trailing particles of light were beautiful. Even the adventurers who had gathered in larger numbers than usual to take up the requests were following its movements with their eyes.

“What's going on?”

“Is that a fairy?”

“It's a fairy!”

As the adventurers gradually regained their composure, a commotion arose. And as expected, the inevitable happened almost immediately.

“Hey, hey, hey, don't you think we could make a fortune if we catch that thing?”

“That's a great idea, bro!”

A group of four adventurers started chasing after the fairy. Then, other adventurers joined in, and everyone was reaching out, wanting a piece of the action. The fairy deftly avoided the adventurers' hands and the nets, darting around in all directions. This is bad, I need to stop this

somehow!

As I was about to shout to get everyone's attention, an adventurer who couldn't keep up with the fairy's sudden change of direction crashed into the reception counter!

"Oh no!"

I instinctively stepped back, and the adventurer's head collided with the spot I had just occupied, scattering the documents on the counter.

"Oh no!"

Over by the wall, another adventurer had crashed into the request board, splitting it in two, and request forms were flying everywhere.

"Oh noooo!"

Both the guild staff and I let out cries of despair.

"Hey, who the hell put a net on me?"

"What? You're the one who bumped into me!"

"What did you say?"

Ah, this is... this is really bad. It's spiraling out of control!  
Adventurers are now fighting each other! I can't handle this anymore!  
I crouched behind the counter, trying to hide.

The fight was spreading rapidly, turning into a full-blown brawl! I can't do anything anymore. I'm shrinking down, trying to stay out of sight.

"Hey, you there!"

A shout suddenly came, breaking through the chaos. It was a senior receptionist. She said she's going to get the guildmaster! She told me to do my best to minimize the damage.

“Huh? Minimize the damage? Me?”

It's impossible, impossible! It's too much!

“That's right, leave it to me!”

With those words, the senior receptionist left the guild.

“Wait, wait a moment, senpai!”

I tried to get up to chase after her, but a chair flew towards me! That was close! It almost hit me!

Looking around, most of the adventurers were no longer chasing the fairy. They were fighting everywhere. It had turned into a full-blown riot!

Where's the fairy? Is it gone?

Oh, there it is.

The fairy was in the guild's attached tavern, eating meat.

No way... Is this for real?

## Chapter 22 - Guild Master

“You idiots! What the hell are you doing?”

I’m the Guild Master, and I was in the middle of an important discussion, but these morons caused a riot that only the guild masters could stop. What the hell were they thinking, causing a full-blown brawl? Every single one of them is acting like an idiot. Ugh, and now the request board is split in two.

The other night, it suddenly started pouring rain. I had been worried that we were in trouble if the rain didn’t come soon, so I was relieved.

We quickly held an emergency meeting at the guild when it was determined that ships could move. The flow of goods had been halted for a long time. We were short on food and materials, but more importantly, we were lacking in potions. I discussed our response moving forward.

Then, the day after the rain stopped, I went to the Merchant Guild in the morning to confirm the potion procurement and sent the sub-master to the Apothecary Guild to check the inventory status and future production of potions.

In recent years, due to poor harvests, bandits had increased, stopping overland logistics, and the lack of rain had halted river transport. But somehow, only potions kept flowing out to other countries. We had conducted investigations, suspecting someone was intentionally hoarding them, but the buyers were various individuals from different nations, and there didn’t seem to be any connection between them. It seemed like someone was deliberately causing shortages, but we couldn’t quite grasp the whole picture.

Potions were a lifeline for adventurers. With such shortages, it would affect our requests. At worst, it could lead to deaths.

Having a supply of potions was crucial.

Plus, while the rain was welcome, if it rained, the impact of the “Twins” this year would likely be significant. The more potions we had, the better.

And amidst all these important discussions, you’re telling me that a fairy showed up and a brawl broke out? What nonsense. A stern reprimand calmed down the brawl, but... this was worse than I had anticipated.

“So, a fairy appeared? Where is that fairy?”

I asked the newbie receptionist, who was peeking out from behind the counter, half her face showing.

“Um, well, she already flew away... She was eating meat just a moment ago.”

“What? She was eating meat and now she’s gone? Are you sure she was really a fairy?”

“There’s no doubt about that. She was definitely a fairy.”

“Zanten, were you here too?”

Zanten, a somewhat slender mid-ranked adventurer, joined the conversation. While he wasn’t particularly skilled in subjugation tasks, he was quite competent with investigation requests.

“Nobody seems to know why things got so chaotic. What happened that caused everyone to go berserk?”

“Well, everyone was trying to catch the fairy that suddenly appeared.”

“With this many adventurers causing such a ruckus, how come nobody managed to catch her?”

“Well, that’s just impossible. There were probably a lot of people who didn’t even notice amidst the commotion, but that fairy was slipping through things. She moved in a way that made it seem like you could catch her, but no matter what you did, you couldn’t actually catch her.”

“What? Fairies can slip through things? Why did a fairy suddenly come to the guild?”

“I have no idea. I’m curious too. If you put in a request, I can investigate it for you.”

If Zanten investigates, we might learn something... I decided to submit a request.

“Alright, I’ll make a designated request from the guild. Go investigate and gather information related to the fairy’s appearance.”

“Sure thing. I’ll head out to do that right away. We can deal with the request formalities later, right? Make sure to reward me generously.”

“Got it.”

“Sure thing.”

His words and actions might seem light, but he’s got a good track record with investigation missions. He should be fine.

But more importantly, I need to sort out this chaotic guild. Seriously, why did they have to go and cause trouble during this busy period?

“Hey, you, start repairing the request board. Do it urgently.”

“What? Me? But I’m supposed to handle reception duties!”

“We’ll handle reception. You focus on repairing.”



“But, senpai, this is...”

“I’m going back to the Merchant Guild once more. I’m leaving the rest to you.”

Sigh, why does everything just keep piling up like this... I decided to quickly return to the Merchant Guild.

## Chapter 23 - Meat

As I wandered around the Adventurer's Guild, I noticed that adventurers were gathered around what seemed to be a notice board, adventurers were forming lines, receptionists were attending to them, and adventurers were dining at the nearby food corner. Everyone's attention was directed towards me.

And in the next moment, a group of four suddenly lunged at me. Oh well, but I don't really feel threatened. After all, I can just slip through them if things get rough. I instinctively dodged their approach.

With those four leading the charge, most of the adventurers within the guild started chasing after me. What's going on?

Has the royal family issued a decree or something? They're shouting my name, albeit using a nickname. Touching the royal pet is out of the question, right? Let's stay back!

I had been quite relaxed, thinking that I could easily slip away, but with this many people chasing after me with such intensity, it was getting scary. Wow, their arms are stretching out like two fists further than I thought they could.

Adventurers are incredible, their physical abilities are amazing.

But let's see how they handle this. I'll act like I'm going right and then quickly turn left! What, you're following my feint? You're like a homing missile. But I know how to deal with homing missiles. You lure them towards an obstacle and barely dodge at the last moment, right?

I sprinted straight towards the edge of the reception counter... and collided with it! I made a sudden turn to the right just before hitting it, and the adventurers crashed into the counter! Papers scattered like special effects, and the receptionist had a look of despair. Sorry about that.

As I continued to evade them, I noticed that the adventurers had

started fighting amongst themselves.

Huh? Weren't they chasing me? Hey, over here! It's me, the fairy!

Well, whatever. It's better if they're not chasing me.

I looked at the table in the dining corner. The food placed on it was in complete disarray, but there were still intact dishes towards the back. No adventurers were eating them. They're probably too busy fighting. For now, they're safe, but with this brawl going on, even the intact dishes could get damaged eventually.

Sigh, I guess I have no choice. I mean, if I leave them as they are, they'll get ruined. So why not just eat them myself? I'm being kind and eco-friendly, right? Bon appétit!

Hmm, adventurers sure know how to eat. It's meat, big chunks of it. Not much fat on it. It's more like a wild dish of roasted chunks of meat rather than a steak. It's lightly seasoned with salt. The utensils are left out too, but using that large knife and fork is quite a struggle. I fashioned my own set of utensils in my size. But how should I eat this?

The meat is about half the thickness of my height. Cutting it is a bit of a challenge. I stabbed the fork into it to give it a try.

Huh?

This is... I twisted the fork. The meat started to shred, and a strip about the thickness of my pinky finger separated. I pulled it off and took a bite from one end. Mmm, it's subtly flavored, but delicious, like beef. Visually, it might look like I'm taking a bite out of a giant sushi roll, but nobody seems to mind amidst this brawl. Yummy!

But then I noticed that the receptionist was looking at me. She had a strange expression on her face. Maybe she's shocked to see a fanciful fairy like me chomping down on meat so voraciously, causing a mismatch between her idealized image and reality. Oops, my bad.

However, this is massive! There's no way I can finish all of it. I still want to explore the town, and I haven't seen the whole Adventurer's Guild yet. But there's this commotion. Maybe I should come back another day. There seem to be injured people from the fight, and I'm partially responsible, so I should help them out. Alright then, hang in there, town.

I'm coming!

I dashed out of the Adventurer's Guild.

# Chapter 24 - Fairy Investigation

“Well then, let’s give it a shot, shall we?”

Having taken on the task of investigating the fairy, I decided to start by tracing its movements.

I had considered asking around in the direction the fairy had gone, but it seemed unnecessary. The townspeople were in a frenzy, and that’s undoubtedly where the commotion was coming from. It would be quite comical if I got it wrong, but I’m pretty sure I’m on the right track.

“Excuse me, coming through!”

Navigating through the crowd, I spotted the epicenter of the commotion. The fairy was darting around multiple food stalls.

Oh, they’re having a grand time. It’s quite refreshing, actually.

Just as I thought I had caught up, it fluttered away again. This could be quite a challenge just following its trail. Maybe I took this task a bit too lightly.

Hm, it’s definitely slipping through walls. Is its flying speed faster than that of a horse? Even though its wings resemble those of an insect, its flight pattern is more bird-like. Right now, it’s darting here and there, so I can keep up. But in a chase, I doubt I’d be able to catch up at all with its current behavior. I’m curious about its other abilities too; at the guild, it casually provided healing for adventurers, but what about combat?

Speaking of which, when I was eating meat at the guild, it suddenly produced a knife and fork. It didn’t possess them before that moment. I picked them up since they were left behind, but what kind of trick was that...?

Oh my, now it's at a café? It's got quite an appetite. Almost as if it's a tourist visiting the capital for the first time. Hey, watch out! You surprised the waiter, and they almost tripped. Can't be helped.

"Uh, are you alright?"

"Oh, thank you..."

"No problem. Well then, I'll be on my way."

I looked away for a moment, and it had already vanished. It's quick. But I don't have to worry about losing it; it's leaving a trail of light. Next, is it heading to a souvenir shop? Seriously, it's like a sightseeing tourist. Wait, seriously? Is a fairy really here for sightseeing?

From the Central Square's Adventurer's Guild, it caused a ruckus all the way down South Street, turning west at last. Oh, it's getting higher up. I won't be able to keep up with that altitude. But I have to go as far as I can.

Huff, huff... Don't make a middle-aged guy like me sprint up a busy incline like this. So, I see, it's heading towards the noble district... Is it a noble, a castle, or the forest near the castle? Speaking of which, despite all the commotion it caused in town, the guards were quite calm. This might be connected to high-ranking nobles or even the royal family. Not a fan of that idea.

Well, I still have to investigate. It's more for my homeland than an actual guild request. Since most of my comrades from the spy team were captured earlier, I suppose I should put in more effort.

I also have preparations for a stampede, but...

# Chapter 25 - Alchemist

After visiting the Adventurer's Guild yesterday, I toured the central square to the southern gate before returning to the castle.

The following day, I found myself once again in the city for sightseeing.

As I headed from the castle towards the city, the river came into view. Considering the size of the moored ships, the water level of the river was clearly low. With ships of that magnitude present, it wasn't an ordinary water level. There was rain during the night after I returned to the castle yesterday. It seems we've transitioned from the dry season to the rainy season. While the river's water level had definitely increased since yesterday, it was still far from abundant. Can it recover enough to accommodate those massive ships during this rainy season?

If the climate here follows a one-year cycle of stability, it should transition back to the dry season around the same time next year. In that case, those large ships would only be operational for a certain period following the rainy season.

Preparing such enormous ships exclusively for that period raises questions about the purpose. Could there be a significance to it?

The southern side I visited yesterday indeed seemed more prosperous than the western side, boasting various souvenir shops and cafes. The west is probably a residential area while the south seems more commercial.

However, the souvenir shops didn't quite meet my expectations. Most of the shelves were empty overall. I tend to lose interest when there are empty spaces on display shelves. It gives off an aura of a once-thriving tourist spot that has fallen into disuse.

Are there few tourists here? I doubt that's the case due to the lower level of civilization in this world. If that were true, they could simply

reduce the size of the shelves in the souvenir shops. The spacious shelves indicate that there was a time when plenty of tourists visited. Whether that was a seasonal issue or a consequence of the place already being abandoned is unclear.

I had hoped to find local merchandise, but there wasn't much that caught my eye. There were pottery and plates, but having knowledge of utensils from my past life makes them seem less appealing. It seems the shops in the southern area, starting from the square, cater to the common folk. I know from the castle that the noble class is into extravagant tableware. Surprisingly, there weren't many food-related souvenirs; mostly they were preserved foods.

Now, where should I go today? I've already chosen my destinations. It seems that the main buildings are gathered around the central square. First, I'll head towards that sign with the flask relief. I suspect it might be related to alchemy!

Upon entering, there was a counter, and it felt like a waiting room. Long benches were evenly spaced out, giving it a hospital lobby vibe. Speaking of hospitals, the lighting here isn't too bright due to the underdeveloped lighting technology in this world.

I could detect a faint aroma of chemicals. Perhaps this place is related to alchemy, or maybe it deals with potions and medicines. Despite that, the place seemed deserted, with only one person at the counter. Oh, the person behind the counter just retreated into the back. Is it really okay to leave the place unmanned? Quite careless, aren't they?

For now, I took out my map and checked the layout of the building. It has four floors above ground and two basement levels. With that, I'm guessing I should head to the basement. That's where you'd usually find mysterious experiments and such, right? I phased through the floor and headed downstairs.

Huh? Where are the mysterious experiments? The room is full of wooden shelves, resembling a warehouse. I had imagined a place where huge cauldrons held various potions that would change color as they simmered and simmered...



While the room was lined with shelves, most of them were empty. Only a few vials were placed on the shelves at the corners. I recognized them as healing potions, though I'm not sure why. But that's about it.

For such a spacious room, having so few things inside feels wasteful. This feeling of emptiness also struck me at the souvenir shop yesterday. Speaking of which, the treasure room in the castle also seemed to have very few items.

Having more healing potions is definitely a good thing. Alright, I'll make some and replenish the shelves. I created healing potions and placed them on the shelves, giving the vials a touch of elegance by adding a gold border with a fairy-wing pattern. I continued to produce them, filling the shelves more and more. Yeah, that looks much better when the shelves are full.

Afterwards, I went down to the second basement. Similar barren shelves were found there.

Oh well, there's no helping it. I'll make some mana potions this time and fill the shelves.

Alright, now let's head upstairs. Phasing through the ceiling, I bypassed the first floor and reached the second floor.

Oh, there are a few men here. They seem surprised and are looking at me. There are about ten desks lined up, each cluttered with papers. The second floor must be an administrative area.

Wait, what's going on? I'm not quite sure, but the men on the second floor are approaching me with small vials in their hands. They're wearing black coats with various instruments hanging from their belts, and if they're saying this place is for alchemy, then I can understand their attire. They're wearing what you'd expect from alchemists. These men in black

coats are approaching me with vials. Are they planning to trap me in those vials? Let's step back a bit and observe their behavior.

The men in black coats are now waving the small vials around where I was just standing. What are they doing? It's definitely suspicious.

After they seemed satisfied with swinging the vials around, they turn their attention back to me. Are they coming towards me...? I thought they were here to capture me, but the men in black coats are now holding the vials below them and seem delighted. What's going on, are they... perverts? Pervert black coats.

I was taken aback and distanced myself. The pervert black coats also moved the vials below where I was standing. I moved, and the vials moved too. What's this, it's eerie.

Feeling frightened, I quickly left the area.

## Chapter 26 - Apothecary Guild

“That’s what I told you, we don’t have any potion stock.”

I heard my master’s loud voice coming from the basement.

Curious, I went down to the underground storage area to check, and there I found my master, who is the master of the Apothecary Guild, and the sub-master of the Adventurer’s Guild, engaged in a discussion.

“I see. So, without the materials, we can’t produce anything, right?”

The Apothecary Guild’s building is a four-story structure, with the basement being used as a storage area. The ground floor contains a lobby, reception desk, and negotiation spaces towards the back, while the second floor is reserved for offices. The third and fourth floors house the mixing rooms and temporary rest areas. Lately, there’s been a shortage of potions in the country, and even the underground storage of the Apothecary Guild in the capital city is completely empty.

“That’s what I’ve been saying. I thought it was the adventurers’ job to gather materials.”

“Hehe, the master of the Apothecary Guild sure is strict. We did issue collection requests, but the drought has dried up the medicinal herbs as well.”

This conversation was something I had heard many times before. For the past few years, even the herb garden behind the Apothecary Guild has been looking quite withered.

“But it rained yesterday. We should be able to gather at least a few medicinal herbs. Please make preparations for mixing.

Also, the logistics will start moving. So, please do your best to secure potions and materials on your end as well.”

“Oh, yeah, understood.”

If logistics are moving, maybe we can finally get some proper work done. But judging by the nonchalant response my master gave, the situation might not be as favorable as it seems.

The rest of the day passed without anything particularly unusual happening. However, there was quite a commotion in the city, as fairies had appeared. We learned about it the next day.

“That sub-master! He appeared at the Adventurer’s Guild too, didn’t he? He didn’t mention a word about it!”

It seemed like my master really wanted to see fairies. Ever since he caught wind of the rumors in the city, he had been grumbling non-stop to me and the other guild members...

“Let’s find those fairies. If we let this opportunity slip, we might not have a chance to make contact again. If we capture one, it could trigger a revolution like the Apothecary Guild has never seen before.”

“Master, that’s not a good idea. There’s a royal decree against touching fairies. They say ‘hands off the fairies.’”

I handed my master the royal decree that had just arrived.

“Hmm, what’s this flimsy piece of paper...? They say I should treat the fairy with respect because it’s a guest of the First Princess? Huh?”

My master’s face became as serious as dried herbs.

“It’s fine if we don’t catch one, right? Apparently, this fairy is scattering particles of light. Even if we just collect those particles and study them, my era could begin.”

“Are you serious? Whenever you’re this blatantly driven by desire,

things usually end up going bad...”

“Then you’re not interested? Fairy scales are considered legendary materials in various books. Up until now, I’ve thought of them as just myths, but if fairies are real, the situation changes. We might be able to achieve those mythical potions.”

“Well, I’d love to see them too. But isn’t it risky to lay a hand on the princess’s guest?”

“What are you saying? We’ll gently collect the floating scale particles, no need to touch the actual being.”

My master reclined in his chair, not seeing any issues. But, well, I guess he has a point. If we’re just gently collecting the floating particles, maybe it won’t be a problem.

“But we don’t know where they are, right? I’ll be at the reception desk, so please call me if you find any.”

I had never actually thought that I’d be able to see fairies, so I went about my work as usual. But then a fairy actually appeared right before me.

Oh my, it’s really a fairy! For an apothecary like me, fairies are already a legend. Oh no, I need to hurry and call my master. If I miss this chance and he can’t see the fairy, he’ll never let me hear the end of it!

I rushed up to the second floor.

“Ma-Master! A fairy! A fairy appeared!!”

“Wh-what!? Where, where is it? Where are my materials!?”

“Umm, is this for real?”

“I want to see too!”

As I called for my master, everyone present reacted.

“Uh, it appeared on the first floor... a fairy came out.”

“Alright, let’s go!”

But when we all hurriedly returned to the first floor, the fairy was gone.

“It’s gone! Where did it go?!”

My master grabbed me by the collar.

“Ma-Master, please calm down, I can’t breathe...”

“Master, please remain calm. At least we know it’s still in the city.”

“Yes, calm down. Besides, we need to go back and make preparations.”

My master released me and headed back upstairs. Everyone followed suit.

Then we discussed preparations for collecting fairy scales, assigned areas for the search, and established shift schedules for tasks in the meantime. And just as we were about to start moving, the fairy reappeared, right from the floor!

“Ah!”

“A fairy!”

“There it is!”

“My material!”

“Everyone, please stay calm. Let’s approach it slowly.”

Everyone nodded at my words. Alright, gently... gently... there!

As we approached, the fairy suddenly flew away. Its scales were dancing in the air!

“Don’t let it escape, catch every single particle!”

“Hehehe!”

We carefully collected the floating scales using collection bottles. Oh, if I bring the bottle too close, it seems the scales get pushed away by its influence... this is quite challenging. Alright, I got some. There’s more...

After carefully collecting the fairy scales that were floating in the air, we realized that the fairy was still flying around.

“Hey... it’s still here.”

We can still do this. It appears that the floating scales eventually fall to the ground on their own. We all positioned our collection bottles beneath the fairy. Ah, don’t move.

“Ahh! My material!”

## Chapter 27 - Secret Hideout

Oh, that's the kid who swung a stick at me before!

Escaping from the bizarre figure in the black coat and leaving the Flask Signboard building, I spotted the trio of children I had encountered in the plaza yesterday. The three children seem to be of different ages. While they don't appear to share a similar demeanor, I assume they are siblings. The older brother gives off a slightly defiant vibe, the middle one seems rather ordinary, and the youngest appears a bit timid. Even the older brother seems younger than the silver-haired girl.

Are these siblings trying to tell me something? Are they beckoning me? Using typical child gestures, it's like they're saying, "Come over here."

Well, when it comes to sightseeing, getting locals to guide you to hidden spots can be quite interesting. So, I decided to follow the three children.

They sprinted at full speed. Indeed, children are swift! I need to keep an eye on them, or I'll lose track. Wait a minute, this isn't exactly a leisurely sightseeing stroll...

The two older kids, both siblings, dashed off at a pace that seemed to defy the capabilities of their small bodies. Hey, wait up! The younger brother is falling behind! Come on, don't leave him behind! Aww, he looks so teary-eyed. Big brother, pay more attention! Well, I suppose there's no helping it.

I lifted the younger brother and soared forward, chasing after the older siblings. The little guy who was initially startled gradually broke into a smile. I see, he's having fun. I'm glad he's enjoying it. Let's give him a little extra service.

When there was a lull in pedestrian traffic, I guided the younger brother in various twists and turns, giving him a fun experience. It's



like riding a roller coaster. Look, we're going up high!

Before I knew it, the two older siblings had come to a stop and were staring at me. When I turned my gaze in their direction, they pointed to themselves and gestured as if they wanted to say something. I see, they want to experience the

roller coaster too. All three of them together might be a bit tricky, though. Can I manage to lift all three at the same time?

I might be able to handle that, but I'm not sure about maintaining safety for all three at once. I gently lowered the younger brother and began by lifting the older, bigger brother. Look, we're doing a loop!

After satisfying the middle sibling as well, we resumed moving. It seems like we're heading east. I didn't notice it initially since I was focused on not losing track of them, but we're already near the eastern gate.

Once we arrived at the eastern gate, we veered away from the main road along the city wall and found a set of stairs leading downward. About halfway down the height of an average adult male, there's a gate leading out of the city wall.

It's not as grand as the eastern, western, or southern gates; it's more like a simple gate with a door that's been left wide open.

Although there's a soldier stationed there, he didn't say anything as the kids passed through. The soldier's gaze was fixed on me. I guess fairies are still quite rare.

After passing through the gate with the kids, we arrived at a dock. I think the gate we went through was meant for the crew. Since there's a larger gate further down the slope, that's probably where cargo is unloaded. Moreover, the city wall continues on the outside of the eastern gate, allowing travelers who disembark from ships to enter the city through the eastern gate. So, that inconspicuous little door we passed earlier was probably for employees only.

I'm not sure why kids can pass through without a problem, but since the soldier didn't say anything and the kids seemed unfazed, I suppose

it's business as usual.

The kids paid no attention to the ships and instead ran all the way to the end of the dock. Under the platform's drop-off, there should normally be water from the river, but the water level is currently low, and there's no water. The part of the platform that's slightly discolored likely indicates how high the water would normally reach.

The kids jumped off the platform onto the now-dry riverbed. Wait, isn't that dangerous? What if the water suddenly rushes in and they get swept away?

Descending to the riverbed revealed that there are arched hollows in the city wall. There's a space of about ten meters square. From the back of that space, a trench runs, and water flows into it. I see, this must be a drainage channel into the river. Is this space for maintenance purposes?

Apart from the three kids who brought me here, there are six more kids in this space. Various toys are scattered around.

Ah, I get it! This is it! A secret hideout! I've been invited to the city's children's secret hideout! What a great spot to discover!

The three kids who led me here and the six who were already here are engaged in conversation. The older brother has a triumphant smile on his face as he demonstrates something using gestures. He raises his hands and makes various motions, waving them around. Ah, I see, he's showing off the roller coaster I treated them to earlier. It's quite endearing.

Afterward, the other kids pestered me to give them turns on the roller coaster, so I took them one by one. They pointed at random things in the hideout, giving explanations that I couldn't quite follow. The kids are in high spirits. After playing along and entertaining them, I realized that it was already dusk.

One of the kids gave off an anxious vibe, suggesting that it was time to head back, so we disbanded the group. I should head back to the

castle as well. I want to take a bath since I was playing around in the drainage channel. Speaking of which, they let me take a bath when I got back yesterday. I hope they've prepared a bath for me today too.

In the midst of the evening twilight, I flew back toward the castle. Both moons are out, and they look beautiful.

Depending on the time, you can see one moon or both, or sometimes neither. One of them feels normal, but the other one moves unusually fast. Its orbital period must be incredibly short. Perhaps its phases change rapidly as well. Yesterday, it looked like a half-circle, but today, it appears slightly more rounded.

I wonder what I should do tomorrow.

# Chapter 28 - The Children

“Fairies? Yeah right!”

The three of us brothers met a fairy yesterday. When we told our friends in the secret hideout group, they all accused us of lying...

Even though our younger brothers must have seen it too, they didn't defend our claim against the older kids' denial.

Maybe it was because I was the only one vehemently arguing, making the situation seem even more suspicious.

“Come on, you both saw it too, right? Cain and Saint?”

“Well, yeah.”

“Yeah...”

Cain is my actual younger brother, but Saint, the youngest, isn't related to us by blood. His adventurer parents never returned, so our close-knit family took him in. Perhaps that's why Saint is always timid and reserved. Now, with everyone around us accusing us of lying, he's even more apprehensive.

“You guys talked about this, right? Fairies are just stuff from storybooks.”

“That's right! If you're so sure, then bring one here!”

“Fine, I'll do it! I'll bring one!”

Frustrated, I decided to take my younger brothers with me to find a fairy. Reluctantly, they followed along. Starting from where we saw the fairy near the fountain yesterday, we began asking people around

the city for information. Soon enough, we heard that the fairy had headed south after our encounter.

However, when we followed the fairy's trail all the way to the southern gate, we hit a dead end. The gatekeeper was unhelpful and shooed us away when we tried to ask if the fairy had left the city. Feeling lost, we returned to the fountain.

That's when...

We found it!

Even my two younger brothers, who had been sulking the whole time, suddenly lit up with excitement.

"Wow, that's amazing! It really is a fairy."

"It's glowing... so beautiful."

Desperately, I tried to communicate with the fairy and asked it to come with us to the secret hideout.

"Hey! Could you please come with us for a bit?"

"...?"

No matter how much we talked, the fairy didn't respond. It just stared at us in bewilderment. Could it be that this fairy can't talk? I gestured towards our destination and then pointed to us, trying to convey that we wanted it to come along.

My brothers joined in, and after a few more attempts at gesturing, the fairy began to approach us.

"Is it coming with us?"

"Who knows? Let's move a bit and see."

As we moved, the fairy followed suit. I was elated and found myself breaking into a run. After running for a while, I noticed the city's atmosphere growing restless. It had already been buzzing with excitement due to the presence of the fairy, but now it seemed even more agitated.

When I looked back, Saint was flying.

"Whoa! What's that? It's amazing!"

"Wow! Saint, when did you learn to fly?"

"Idiot, Saint didn't learn to fly! The fairy's making him fly, look!"

The fairy was gesturing towards the direction Saint was flying in. Conversely, Saint didn't seem to understand where he was headed.

"Hey! Can you do that for me too? Make me fly too!"

"Ah, I want to fly too!"

From then on, we had an absolute blast as the fairy flew us through the sky. It's not often you get to experience flight. We were probably the only ones among our friends who had ever flown in the sky. We'd zoom straight and then suddenly make a sharp turn! It felt like becoming a bird! The sensation of limbs being pulled when making a turn was exhilarating and novel.

After a while, we managed to bring the fairy back to the secret hideout. This hideout, tucked away a short walk from the riverbank, was our cherished discovery from two years ago. There's no water on this riverbed. Even if it rains, it only gets slightly wet; it doesn't form a current. Dad always said we should never go down to the riverbed, even when there's no water, but you can easily tell if water is coming by looking at the river upstream. Plus, we've never had any issues before, so it's fine.

Returning to the secret hideout, our friends who had doubted the fairy's existence had their eyes widen in amazement.

Hehe, I told them it was true. Our group consists of friends whose parents are sailors. We became friends as we helped with unloading cargo from ships and such. The day before yesterday, it rained, and it seemed like the ships might set sail.

So, everyone was assigned cargo duty yesterday, we all gathered after a long time, and that's why we decided to meet up today.

"Wow, it's real! It's really a fairy!"

"Amazing!"

"It's glowing, just like fairies that fly with wings."

"Hehe, you guys, we were flown by the fairy in the sky!"

I quickly boasted. Among this group, only we brothers got to experience flying in the sky.

"Seriously!?"

"Huh? What's that? That's so unfair!"

"I want to fly too!"

"Me too!"

As expected, our friends were all envious. But the kind fairy gave everyone a chance to fly. I lost a bit of my special feeling, but it was quickly replaced by the joy of sharing the thrill of flying and exchanging excited conversations.

After everyone had their turn flying, we showed the fairy our

treasures. Everyone brings a secret treasure to the hideout.

We usually keep them hidden and don't show them to anyone, but this fairy is different. It's practically part of our group now. Saint showed the fairy a keepsake from our parents with a delighted expression. Seeing Saint, who rarely smiles, actually happy put me at ease.

Time flew by quickly during our fun moments. Before we knew it, the evening twilight had arrived, and we hurriedly headed back home.

And then, just because we were late, Mom scolded us like crazy... Why does it always happen to me?



## Chapter 29 - The Dress

When I woke up in the morning, the birdcage maid was making some suspicious movements.

Today, I had plans to go sightseeing in the city again, but it seemed like there was something the maid wanted from me.

As I tried to step out of the birdcage and head towards the window, she gestured to convey something.

Hmm, I don't understand. It's like a mysterious dance now. I can't make heads or tails of it, but I did gather that she didn't want me to leave. She seemed visibly relieved when I returned to the room, so there's no doubt about it.

Looking outside, a crowd of knights had gathered in the square in front of the castle. As I watched, the knights began to leave in groups. I wonder what's going on, some kind of expedition? It doesn't seem like they're just going for a nearby

mission or something. The luggage seemed quite substantial. It feels like they're going on a rather distant journey.

Suppressing my desire to follow them, I absentmindedly watched the knights get smaller as they left.

Then the door was knocked, and a bunch of people entered the room. First, there was the silver-haired girl and the close-up guy, followed by several maids accompanying them. After that, there was a slightly chubby man I hadn't seen before, followed by three women carrying some luggage. Wow, that's a lot of people. The room suddenly felt much smaller.

The close-up guy and the man were talking. Is this person a merchant? Behind them, the three women started unpacking the luggage and preparing something. Ah, those are... sewing tools, right? I can see needles, threads, and scissors. So, these three women must be seamstresses.

While all this was happening, the chubby merchant started talking to me. I still have no idea what he's saying, but he's smiling a lot. What is it, what is it? As I pondered this, the triple seamstresses brought out a few dresses in my size.

Oh right, they took measurements of me. And I became a dress-up doll. My size is practically doll-like anyway. They must have worked really quickly to make all these in such a short time. I think I got measured about four days ago, right?

As they kept changing dresses on me, the close-up guy and the triple seamstresses were all excited. They must really love cute things; the four of them seemed to be having a blast, getting along so well. Is this really okay, being a queen and all?

Isn't there a social gap or something with the seamstresses? Well, it's much better than not getting along.

Eventually, the chubby merchant quietly left the room. He probably didn't want to see a girl changing clothes. I don't mind being seen, but I feel like some part of me just got stripped away.

All the dresses I was put into were of the frilly type. The cuffs and everything flared out quite a bit. It might be challenging to make the tight-fitting ones, or maybe they didn't size me up correctly. No, they didn't measure my arm size or anything like that.

Beads were used instead of buttons. They're attached in a way that you thread the larger beads through holes to secure them. Well, small buttons wouldn't work anyway.

The edges of the clothes are neatly folded and sewn to prevent fraying. Very detailed. I think everything is hand-sewn, but sewing something like this must drive you crazy. Seriously, it's amazing that they managed to prepare all of this in just four days.

Boots were also provided. Since I usually go barefoot, this might come in handy. They're made of very thin leather. They probably couldn't make synthetic leather, so it's impressive they could provide such thin leather. The soles are wooden.

When I actually put them on, these boots hurt my bare feet. It feels like they don't quite match the shape of my feet. I might get blisters from them. There's no lining, just the leather directly rubbing against my skin. At least give me some socks. Well, I guess it's too small for that.

Hmm, these boots won't be practical for a while. But I can't communicate my thoughts with words. As a sign of protest, I threw the boots aside. Oh no, don't look so sad... I feel so guilty now...

After going through the various changes of clothes, I was stripped down again for measurements. Last time, they measured my height and waist and some other key points. This time, they seemed to be measuring even the smaller details. I had a measuring tape wrapped around my arm. My arms, like chopsticks, were skillfully measured with the human-sized measuring tape.

Wait, they're measuring my fingers too? Seriously? Are they going to make gloves? Or maybe rings? No, no, no, it's impossible to measure my fingers with that measuring tape. One of the triple seamstresses struggled with it but eventually gave up after a while.

And then she wound a thread around my finger and measured its length. Wow, they're really persistent. Impressive. Even so, they don't need to measure so meticulously, right? The frilly dress from earlier is good enough, isn't it? And so, I ended up with threads wrapped around various parts of me...

I don't get why it's fun, but the close-up guy was smiling and enjoying the whole measuring process. The silver-haired girl was just normal. Maybe she's not the type to be swayed by cute things. Or perhaps her emotions don't show on her face? Well, whatever, she's in a sulky mood anyway.

And so, after being a doll for quite some time, the triple seamstresses started packing up to leave. The chubby merchant, who must have returned at some point, came to say goodbye. Yeah, yeah, I don't really get it, but let's go with it.

The chubby merchant and the triple seamstresses left, and I thought, finally, I'm free... But that wasn't the case. The birdcage maid came over with the birdcage again. I recognize this gesture. The house.

As a faithful pet, I returned to the birdcage, ready to be taken somewhere unknown.

## Chapter 30 - Makeup

When I was taken away still in my cage, I was immediately led into the bath. Even though I wasn't particularly dirty today, if they were offering me a bath, I'd happily accept it. Ever since I came here, I've been given a bath every day.

First, I was given a quick rinse. I must admit, my bath isn't just for one person. A maid accompanies me, taking care of everything from start to finish. This maid is different from the cage maid, probably serving as an assistant to the cage maid. I occasionally see her in my room too, so she's not exclusively responsible for baths. She looks quite young, so I assume she's an apprentice.

The apprentice maid poured warm water over me. Using a small container that looked like the one you'd use to drizzle honey over pancakes, she made various adjustments to accommodate my small size. It's truly appreciated.

Once the rinse was done, it was time for a bath. Whee! I jumped in and swam to the other side. They always go all out and prepare a human-sized bath for me, even though a simple basin would suffice. Just two days ago, the apprentice maid watched my swimming with a sad expression, but after two days, she observed it with a more philosophical look.

In these two days, I've made quite a bit of progress with my wing-assisted swimming. The splashing isn't as intense as before. Perhaps I've learned to convert unnecessary energy into propulsion, as my speed has increased. Now I feel confident I can handle rough waves too. Woohoo! I can even dive if I want to – I'm a high-speed submarine!

After swimming for a while and feeling satisfied, the apprentice maid washed my body. She even carefully cleaned my small head with her fingers. It's really soothing. However, I'm still not used to the fact that large droplets of water gather all over my body, following the laws of physics, even though I've become smaller.

Normally, after getting out of the bath, I would be dressed back in my original clothes and returned to my room to sleep.

But today, there's still some time left. Instead of my original clothes, they handed me a dress. Why? I already wore a dress earlier.

They dressed me in the new dress and stood me in front of the vanity. A group of maids surrounded me, each holding makeup tools. Huh? Are they going to do makeup on me? With those large tools?

For the first time, I looked at my own face in the mirror. Green hair and green eyes. Oh, cute. I might be boasting about myself, but I'm quite cute. It seems I'm not the chubby-cute type but the standard cute type that's been chosen as a royal pet.

With that in mind, the maids approached me with their makeup tools. Brushes were dabbed on my face, tapping here and there... Ugh, no! It's ticklish! Stop! It tickles because the brush is shaking!

As the brush approached my eyes, I started trembling. Wait, I'm shaking. The brush is shaking! Noo!

As I attempted to escape, another maid firmly held me in place. What to do? Should I try to slip through and run away?

But if I run now, my face will be comically half-makeup. I'd rather have them finish it. Fine, just go on!

Then, the maid seemed to give up. One of them left the room and returned with a pedestal. It looked like something you'd use for measuring blood pressure. I see, it's to stabilize my arm and minimize shaking. But really, is this for makeup? Not a drafting tool, surely.

With all the struggle and effort, the makeup was finally finished. Just as I thought it was done, I was put back into the cage and transported to an unfamiliar room. My face felt itchy. I desperately wanted to scratch it, but doing that now would ruin the makeup. It might end up looking like Amazon warrior makeup. I resisted the urge.

The room was quite luxurious. Silver-haired girl was there too. As soon as she saw me, she stood up and we, along with the group, moved again. Eventually, we reached a massive door. Two soldiers stood on each side.

Hmm? This opulence, could it be the audience chamber?

In other words, was I being dressed up to meet the king? I see. I better not knock over any vases or anything around here...

# Chapter 31 - The King

I heard this story on the day when my daughter Tires returned home.

The report that started as somewhat amusing became increasingly extraordinary as the days went by.

At first, there was a commotion about the orbs of light. People in the castle were chasing after these orbs, causing chaos as they ran around. The majority of administrative work halted, even though it was nighttime. This fuss was attributed to fairies intruding into the castle. At that time, I couldn't help but think how absurd it was to create such a commotion over fairy tales like this.

The next report came from Tires. Despite the late hour, she urgently wanted to report something. It turns out that when she was attacked by bandits on the way, she was saved by fairies. The report mentioned that these fairies possessed incredibly potent healing abilities, which might even be able to cure my wife's illness.

Furthermore, the fairies' presence seemed to revive withered crops and even brought rain. I distinctly remember that night when a heavy rainfall occurred, an unusual event since rain had been scarce.

I'm truly grateful for protecting and safely delivering my daughter. However, the tales were becoming too fantastical.

From my life experience, the world rarely hands out such favorable stories.

The next day was even more baffling. There was a commotion because the fairies were missing. People searched the city tirelessly and eventually found her swimming in the castle's grand bath. She returned to her original cage and went to sleep. Although the report of her escape was expected, I couldn't fathom the reason for her return.

From there, the tales only became more unbelievable. Unbelievably, the bath where the fairy swam became a sanctuary.



My wife's ailment was miraculously cured after she used the bath. Notably, the bathwater didn't come from the reservoir but was magically produced by the fairy. While this was indeed delightful news, the reports didn't end there.

Remarkably, my wife's illness was revealed to be a curse. It appeared that the former Prime Minister had also been cursed. Once the curse was lifted, its effects were returned to the caster. If it was the Empire's doing, the curse should have returned eastward. Astonishingly, the curse veered west instead. Since then, we've been investigating the source of the curse, and it seems it wasn't local but originated from a distant place.

The effectiveness of the bath diminishes with time, I was informed. So, I instructed that the fairy be bathed daily if possible.

Moreover, there were reports that old wounds were healed simply by the presence of the fairy passing by the Western Gate. To summarize the reports so far, water scarcity, crop failure, shortage of manpower due to wartime injuries – all seemed to be swiftly resolving. Could there be a more fortuitous narrative?

After my wife's recovery, I've been endlessly told how magnificent and adorable these fairies are. Indeed, fairies producing such results are a rare asset for the nation. However, the nightly fairy tales became a bit tiresome for me.

The story wasn't over yet. The following day, there was a commotion in the city. I quickly issued a notice; it was important not to let things run unchecked. The Alchemist Guild and the Commerce Guild, in particular, might eagerly want to exploit this situation, and I had to firmly address that.

The tale continued. Reports from the department responsible for periodically checking the items in the treasury indicated an increase in unregistered treasures. This was another perplexing story. A particular type of treasure sword, identical in shape to the ones we had, but possessing entirely different attributes, had increased in number by four. Investigation revealed that each sword held an attribute corresponding to the color of its gem-studded hilt.

When these swords were tested, the effects were remarkably legendary. Swinging the blue sword caused water blades to shoot out. These blades were precise and could accurately cut distant targets.

Green blades were wind-based, brown caused stones to be hurled, and yellow emitted blinding light, obliterating targets from a distance. This would change the way battles were fought.

Only powerful mages could cast attack magic without incantations. Those individuals dedicated their lives to magic, unable to run around on a battlefield. While spellcasters requiring incantations naturally fought from a protected frontline position, those skilled with swords rarely possessed powerful magic. But with these swords, frontliners who could wield a sword and use formidable magic were born. This might change the course of history. Were these swords also the work of the fairies?

Even though there's plenty to discuss at this point, the story continues. Astonishingly, a sanctuary has formed between the main hall and the western wing. And this wasn't a simple story about the water turning into time-limited holy water. It was said that the space was filled with sacred magical energy, and herbs and magical stones were growing.

Herbs and magical stones were believed to grow where powerful divine beasts and spirits resided. Such locations were found only in treacherous and remote areas, where only top-tier adventurers dared to venture, and these items rarely made it to the market. Yet they were growing within the castle? If true, it would resolve the financial difficulties the nation was facing. However, these items couldn't be sold easily. If we rashly sold them and they ended up in an enemy nation, it could have dire consequences for us. This matter required careful consideration.

The doors to the audience chamber opened. Leading the way, Tires entered, holding the cage.

Now, about this fairy... She's peering curiously, looking at me, then at my wife... Her small face makes it difficult to discern her gaze.

Hmm, she's kneeling... Isn't that astonishing? While mythical tales may not consider human society's hierarchy, this fairy seems to have some knowledge of our social structure. But then again, there's been a series of disturbances. I see.

Truthfully, this audience doesn't hold much significance. I've already received all the reports beforehand, and I simply wanted to confirm the fairy's presence. However, seeing her in person did serve a purpose. My thoughts came together.

She can be left alone. There's no need to think about exploiting her for various purposes. Simply having her here benefits the country more than any potential commotion could harm.

That being said, restraining her within this kingdom would likely be impossible. Even if we grant her status and responsibilities, she's an entity that can simply pass through objects. Even if we were to bestow her with titles and duties, she could easily ignore them.

We can't control such an existence. At best, we can only attempt to be on good terms with her and hope she holds a positive opinion of us.

## Chapter 32 - The Fruit

The audience ended quite quickly. I had no idea about proper etiquette or anything, so I was a bit worried when I was just left there, but surprisingly, everything went smoothly and it was a relief.

The king had blonde hair and a beard. He looked just like the king from a deck of playing cards. His hair was beautifully straight, but he had a broad forehead. He was the embodiment of a regal straight flush.

Beside the king was the close-up guy, and the blonde guy stood beside him. There were others present, but I couldn't quite make them out. And then, it all ended without me understanding much.

After the audience, I was quickly taken back to my room, my dress removed, and my makeup wiped off. When they were changing my dress, I didn't realize how cumbersome it would be until I actually moved around in it. The threads,

designed for a human's size, would rub against my body, creating knots and friction. The wide seam rubbed against my skin and tickled me.

I pointed to the uncomfortable spots on the dress after it was removed, indicating my requests for improvements. The birdcage maid nodded, so she probably understood what I meant. Even though I might never have a chance to wear it again.

After being returned to my usual room by the birdcage maid, the cage was left open. Finally, some free time. It's almost lunchtime, but maybe I should go out to the town. I'll visit the Adventurer's Guild again since I couldn't get a good look last time.

It's nearly lunchtime, so there might be adventurers dining there. I'm really craving some meat. Maybe I can work something out through bartering. Speaking of which, the fruits I planted might be ready by now. I should check them out.

When I went to the spot where I planted the fruit trees, I saw that the small shrubs had grown into impressive trees.

Unfamiliar slightly bluish-white flowers were blooming around them, emitting a faint light. These definitely weren't ordinary flowers. There were also crystalline objects that resembled blue gemstones growing. I sensed a sacred aura from them. It's as if they're proudly saying, "I'm sacred."

Could it be that these flowers and crystals are a result of my influence? They're not present anywhere else around the castle, so there's a significant chance that my presence played a role in their appearance. Well, as long as I don't get caught, I won't be scolded. And even if I am caught, they'll probably be happy and say, "How beautiful!" I'll put that aside for now. Now, for the issue of the fruit...

The small-sized fruits that were about as big as a blade of grass have grown numerous. They're a bit too small for humans, though. For humans, they're even smaller than a pea – tiny enough to easily get lost if dropped.

I decided to try one. Mmm, it's delicious. It tastes like a cross between an apple and a grape. You can eat the skin, and there are no seeds. These would definitely make a fantastic tart. I should leave some in the castle's kitchen. Maybe someone will make something special with them.

Oh, there's one in human size! There's only one, but it's big, about the size of an apple. Alright, I'll take this to the Adventurer's Guild.

But before that, I'll leave the smaller one in the kitchen. I created a small bottle that floated at my height, collected the small fruit, and placed them in the bottle.

Let's see, I think the kitchen was on the first floor, closer to the east side... Or maybe it would be more convenient if it's on the east side, where the dock is. I used my clairvoyance to scope out a secluded spot and infiltrated the kitchen.

For a moment, I thought that if I just wanted to eat some meat, maybe

I didn't need to go all the way to the Adventurer's Guild, but it seemed that the food had already been taken to the dining table.

The walls were covered with frying pans and such. Were these made of copper? Next to the walls, there were three large stoves. Along the windowsill, there were various bottles and containers, and the table was cluttered with ingredients and cooking utensils that seemed to have been used just earlier. Various items were hanging from the ceiling. I inserted the bottle of fruit among the containers by the window and left.

Then, I went back to the fruit tree and obtained the human-sized fruit.

Alright, time to head to the Adventurer's Guild.

## Chapter 33 - The Lazy Adventurer

I was, as usual, drowning my sorrows in the tavern attached to the guild.

The others were out, most likely on escort quests or similar tasks. Currently, the only people present in the guild were a new receptionist, an old man who looked more suited to the kitchen than being a bar master, and myself—a slothful adventurer, lazily lingering around even during daylight.

“Ugh, Duster-san! How about putting in a bit more effort?”

Probably bored due to the lack of activity, the new receptionist had come all the way over here just to give me a piece of her mind.

“Ah, yeah, my old injury’s acting up...”

“Hmm, I see...”

Yeah, I get it. It’s not a good idea to keep slacking off like this. But well, I’m one of those who know how to work smart.

If I take on a request for a day, I can get by for three days even if I spend them lazing around. Since realizing my limitations, I’ve lost that youthful drive to aim higher. Since then, I’ve been consistently leading this idle lifestyle.

Before the rain started, I could still blend in and not stand out. There were a considerable number of adventurers leading lives similar to mine, considering the limited number of available quests. However, when the number of available quests increased, the others eagerly went out to work. I was different from them. Just plain lazy...

After having been an adventurer for many years, I believe my ability to assess situations and various knowledge has developed quite well. However, I was terrible at explaining things. You could even call me

tongue-tied. While adventurers usually form parties and take action together, I couldn't form a party. My lazy lifestyle had an impact on that as well.

"Still, it would be nice if you could put in a bit more work. We're running low on potions, and we need to gather herbs at the very least."

"Yeah..."

"Ugh..."

The receptionist who had given up walked away. Just then, a fairy suddenly entered the guild. The receptionist's mouth gaped open in surprise. Well, it's probably a traumatic memory for her.

That fairy had visited the Adventurer's Guild two days ago as well. At that time, it coincided with the posting of a new request, and there were many adventurers present.

Adventurers are usually a greedy bunch. If something seems profitable, they scramble for it. So, two days ago, there was quite a commotion, to the extent that the request board and the reception counter were damaged.

I had no interest in joining that chaos; I merely watched from a corner of the guild. However, I remember the receptionist being beside the counter when it got damaged, and after the commotion, I recall her sadly hammering nails into the shattered request board during repairs.

Well, whether a fairy shows up or not, it's not my concern. That's what I thought, but it seems I was mistaken. The fairy made a beeline for me as soon as it spotted me. What's more, it's carrying a green ball? Is it fruit? It's floating alongside the fairy as it approaches. I caught sight of the receptionist letting out an evident sigh of relief from the corner of my eye.



The fairy was making comical gestures while hovering over the meat I was eating. It was spinning its arms around.

What's it trying to do? There seems to be some sparkly powder on the meat... but could it not fly around my meat so much?

What are you doing? I was about to say that when, in an instant, a fist-sized green fruit was stuffed into my mouth! Hey!

Seriously! I quickly bit into it, and it turned out to be surprisingly tender.

Mmm, delicious! What's this!?

That fairy had visited the Adventurer's Guild two days ago as well. At that time, it coincided with the moment new quests were being posted, resulting in a gathering of many adventurers.

Adventurers, you see, tend to be a rather greedy lot. And when something that seems lucrative gets thrown into the mix, it usually turns into a contest to see who can grab it first. So, two days prior, it had led to such a frenzy that the request board and reception counter were damaged.

I, however, had no interest in participating in such chaos, and I merely observed from a corner of the guild. Yet, I distinctly remember the receptionist being near the counter when it got damaged. After the commotion died down, I recall her looking sad while hammering nails into the request board that had been split in two during the turmoil.

Well, whether or not a fairy showed up, it didn't concern me. That's what I had thought, but it seemed I was being naive.

The fairy, upon spotting me, made a beeline straight for me. Moreover, what was that? A green ball? Maybe a fruit? It floated alongside the fairy as they approached. I caught the receptionist audibly sighing in relief from the corner of my eye.

The fairy was making a series of comical gestures over the meat I was consuming. It was waving its arms around in circles. What's it trying

to do? There seems to be some sparkly powder falling onto the meat... though I really wished it wouldn't hover around my meat like that.

What's going on? I was about to ask when, the moment I opened my mouth, a fist-sized green fruit was thrust into it!

Seriously! Hey! I hastily bit into it, and it turned out to be surprisingly soft.

Mmm, delicious! What's this!?

As I enthusiastically began devouring the fruit, the fairy began to feast on the meat I was eating.

## **Chapter 34 - Inside the Adventurer's Guild**

Carrying a small, apple-sized green fruit resembling a single muscat grape, I headed towards the Adventurer's Guild.

The river's water had risen again, and slightly larger boats were now shuttling back and forth, laden with cargo. These boats seemed large enough to carry dozens of people if pushed. However, they couldn't reach the unloading area, so smaller boats were shuttling between the docks and the medium-sized boats for cargo transfer. The larger boats remained moored for the time being.

Noticed a change in the town's scenery—flowers blooming in potted plants near the windows. They weren't in bloom when I arrived; perhaps they were flowers that flourished during the rainy season.

Entering the Adventurer's Guild, I found that the bustling crowd from last time was mostly absent. The receptionist blinked at me. What's up? Do you want this fruit? Unfortunately, this one's for trading meat.

Ah, I spotted my prey. In front of a table where adventurers were dining and drinking, I found some meat. I decided to negotiate. I pointed at the fruit and then at the meat, signaling for an exchange.

Waving my arms in circles to express the trade, did that come across? ...Guess not. I tried again, this time rotating both arms, but no response. Well, this and this, exchange. Understand? Me, eat this. You, eat that. Happy, okay?

Ugh... Starting to feel a bit tedious. I felt like a dog waiting for a treat, even though the meat was right in front of me.

Sure, I might be a royal pet, but I'm not your pet.

When the adventurer opened their mouth, I shoved the fruit in. See? It's delicious, right? You can say "delicious." Ah, it seems the small one was tasty. I wonder how the larger one tastes... maybe it's not as good?

A bit worried, but the adventurer started eating the fruit with enthusiasm. There you go, it's tasty after all. Feeling relieved, I decided to enjoy the meat.

I didn't need a steak knife to cut it. I realized that for someone of my size to consume human-sized food, I needed to let go of conventional ideas. I fashioned a sword of my size with a very sharp edge and expertly sliced the meat into thin pieces.

Then I skewered the pieces with a small spear, creating a sort of kebab. Huff, huff, the inside is still warm. Yum! Like last time, it's still lightly salted, though lacking the pepper and spices, it's got a nice touch of saltiness.

Despite my voracious appetite, there's no way I could finish the giant piece of meat intended for human adventurers. After all, it's bigger than me in terms of volume. If I ate it all, my belly would surely swell up more than I'd like. My stomach felt pleasantly full, so I decided to stop here. Thank you for the feast.

Now then, let's explore the Adventurer's Guild again. The dining area I'm in right now has a two-story structure, with the second floor resembling a loft. Six desks are arranged, and a few people are buried in paperwork... looking at me. Yay, peace, peace.

The second floor seems a bit dull... Let's move on to the third floor. There's a corridor with doors lined up. Probably used for negotiations? It's a bit strange to usher customers into the negotiation space while letting them pass right by the second-floor office area, where internal matters might be exposed. Maybe it's due to the unfavorable layout created by the dining area's high ceiling.

Hmm, there's one door at the back that looks a bit more impressive. Let's go in.

Whoa, it's a muscle-bound monster! Our eyes met. Whoa, it's coming this way!

Feeling like I might be caught, I stepped back. In response, the muscle-bound monster stopped in its tracks and seemed to be saying something. Hmmm, I see... I don't understand at all. No, really, let's go to the fourth floor. What? You're coming too? Scary. There's a sense of desperation about it. I feel overwhelmed.

Becoming frightened, I phased through the wall and left the Adventurer's Guild behind. I suppose I'm done with the Adventurer's Guild for now... There's a large, pointed-roof building in the distance. Maybe I'll head over there next **Chapter 35 - Effect**

When I finished eating the fruit, I felt my body growing warm. It's hard for me to explain in words, but right now, I feel like I can do anything. A sense of omnipotence fills me. I noticed that even my old wounds aren't hurting. It's incredible, almost as if I'm not myself anymore. My body feels exceptionally good.

By the time I realized it, the fairy was already gone. I have no way of confirming what that fruit was.

I had an intense desire to test my newfound power, so I decided to go on a monster hunt after a long time. There were escort requests to the south and west roads recently. The escorts should have dealt with the monsters on the roads. Some of the chased monsters would likely gather in the southwest area. It's a good spot to hunt monsters nearby. I'm good at finding hidden spots after all. There's probably no way to go wrong with the location.

After preparing, I left the capital through the southern gate and walked for a few hours westward along the road.

They're here...

A pack of five wolves. They've already noticed me. Normally, I would distract them and either run away or bait them one by one, but for some reason, I felt like I could handle them head-on.

I decided to face them head-on as they charged towards me.

The wolves charged at me, but they suddenly froze. What's going on?

With ease, I shifted my weight by moving my left foot back while keeping my right foot as the pivot point. At the right moment, I swung down my one-handed sword. The wolf's momentum caused its head and torso to separate and slam into the ground.

Just a regular iron sword, but I could sense how much impact it could withstand before breaking. It's as if the sword has become a part of my body.

Simultaneously, a second wolf charged at me from a different angle. I shifted my weight to my left foot and lowered my right foot, then swung my sword upwards.

Despite the downward motion generally having less power, the strike retained its force, and I ended up slicing the wolf almost in half while retreating. The launched wolf passed over me as it tumbled.

My body moves just as I intend. It's like my body effortlessly follows the ideal movements I imagine but could never execute. This is abnormal.

Looking at the two wolves that were brutally defeated, the remaining three wolves stopped moving. One of them tried to dodge as I ran towards it, initiating a preparatory movement.

I could see everything. The shift in its center of gravity as it tried to jump back. The slight sinking of its right front leg compared to the others, indicating its intention to leap right and left from my perspective. I understood it all in an instant.

What kind of observational ability is this? Both the baffled me and the calm me who is certain that the observation is correct coexist.

The calm part of me aligned the sword with the wolf's movement to the left. As a result, the wolf took a powerful strike from the sword's momentum, causing its two front legs and body to fly in separate directions.

Two wolves left. I kicked up sand to distract one and took down the other. With a quick counter, the last one fell in no time.

If it were someone else, they might have wondered how a renowned swordsman would have fared. But it was me who did it. It appears that something has changed within me.

It must be the fairy's influence. There's no other explanation for the effects of that fruit. It would be best to report this to the guild. If the absurd story of lazy adventurers becoming heroes just by eating fruit were to spread, who knows what kind of chaos could erupt. I need to hurry back. I retrieved the parts from the wolves without disassembling them and set off on the journey home.

When I returned to the guild, it was already getting dark, but I tried to explain my abnormal condition to the receptionist.

"Oh, Duster-san. Where did you go after that?"

"Uh, well, I went hunting monsters..."

"Huh? That's unusual, Duster-san going for a subjugation?"

"Uh, yeah, and... the fairy came by at noon."

“What? That’s odd, the Guild Master was really grumpy when he came down, and even though I told her to stay, the fairy seemed to go upstairs... I noticed that you were gone too.”

When she talked so rapidly, I started to lose track of the conversation. I’m surprised I could speak so fluently. I’m envious.

“Uh, sorry about that. So, I got a fruit from the fairy...”

“A fruit? Come to think of it, something was shoved into my mouth at noon, right? Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine... No, wait, that’s not right. That fruit, when you eat it, your body feels better...”

That fruit’s effect is abnormal. As I was pondering how to explain it so she would understand, the receptionist said something.

“Oh, so you experienced it too!”

“Experienced...?”

Are there others who ate that fruit too? With its remarkable effect, if others had eaten it, there would have been rumors or something...

“Yes, whenever someone goes near that fairy, their wounds heal and their bodies feel better!”

What? So, does that mean my improved condition wasn’t due to the fruit, but because the fairy was nearby?

“People from the West Gate and those with old battle scars from the war are making a big fuss! After that fairy came to the guild the other day, several

adventurers had their injuries miraculously healed, and their

conditions improved greatly!”

I see... It seems quite a number of people were affected by this state I experienced. It's a good thing the receptionist explained it to me first. If I had gone around boasting about being special, I would have made a fool of myself.

I realized that what my senior used to say was true, that people who get too conceited end up dying. And I also realized that I wanted to prove myself to those I used to mock and show them that they're wrong.

Dangerous... I shouldn't get carried away. Someone like me, who's no good, should just earn money casually every three days or so.

“Um, Duster-san?”

Feeling embarrassed, I left without saying anything.

Darn it, I forgot to submit the wolf parts to the guild.



# Chapter 36 - The Church

Leaving the Adventurers' Guild, I arrived at a building with a large pointed roof.

The building had a T-shaped structure with a semicircle attached on top, and a symbol resembling a rainbow was displayed on the pointed roof. Judging by the atmosphere, it's probably a church.

Unlike the other prominent buildings whose main entrances faced the sunny southern side, this building's entrance was facing north. Consequently, the space in front of the entrance, which resembled a courtyard, was a bit dim.

The entrance featured the same white rainbow-like arch structure. On it were reliefs of two goddess-like figures. Hmm, could these possibly represent the two moons? When it comes to symbolic representations near rainbows, I can only think of two moons. Are the moons objects of faith?

Upon entering, the soft light from the stained glass windows illuminated the spacious room with an enchanting ambiance.

Ah, I see now, the north-facing entrance was designed to let the light from the stained glass windows inside. A large stained glass was positioned high on the wall at the back of what seemed to be the chapel.

Though I'm assuming it depicts a scene with religious significance, I'm not quite sure how to interpret these abstract illustrations. They're beautiful, that's all.

Despite rows of benches being evenly spaced in the chapel, there were very few people present. Towards the back, there was a person who seemed like a priest. They wore a white robe and a unique hat that resembled the shape of a bent rainbow. A necklace with an arch-shaped pendant adorned their chest. That emblem is probably the symbol of this church.

So, the white rainbow is indeed an object of devotion.

The central ceiling of the chapel was high, presumably to efficiently admit the light from the stained glass. However, the ceilings on the sides other than the center were ordinary. There are probably upper floors above the sides.

There's not a speck of dust on the high ceiling or beneath the benches. It appears they're meticulous about cleaning. At the center back, there was a man flanked by two goddess-like figures. If these two goddesses are associated with the moons, then the remaining figure must represent the sun. Personifications of the moon and the sun? Intriguing.

While pondering these things, people started to gather. Everyone seemed to be wearing a similar attire that conveyed a unified atmosphere, indicating they were probably all affiliated with the church. Some were standing around hesitantly, while others were praying towards me.

Hmmm, considering the appearance of the city and the decorations inside the church, I doubt this country worships fairies or the like. They most likely venerate things associated with the white rainbow and the moons. I've never seen any reliefs or decorations related to fairies. Then why are they praying to me?

The priest-like man from earlier came back with three more important-looking men. Two of them were elderly, and one was middle-aged. They were dressed in attire adorned with gold trim, clearly of high status. High Cleric CC Sisi, that's the name of the middle-aged man.

Then, one of the elderly CC Sisi raised his staff and attacked me. Wait, but I was just being prayed to a moment ago!

What's going on with the worship concept of this religion? One moment they're praying, the next they're attacking? Isn't that insane?

But before I could fully process this, the middle-aged CC Sisi restrained the elderly one. Woah, I didn't want to see that side of the

important personages. The atmosphere shifted from 20% passive observation, 40% prayer, and 40% hesitancy to a solid 100% hesitancy. It was like hesitancy had been concentrated and distilled. Put yourself in my shoes, having to bear these condensed and concentrated admonishments.

The other CC Sisi priest chuckled and gestured towards the exit. Ah, so this is like a “you’re being escorted out” moment, isn’t it? Oh well, I guess I’ll go home now. This church is a bit scary.

When I returned to the castle, dinner was served. It’s my first meal here. Wait, was dinner never served before? Why suddenly have dinner tonight? There were tiny dishes on small plates. I assume they went through the trouble of preparing them for me.

However, unfortunately, I ate meat at the Adventurers’ Guild earlier and had plenty of small fruits. My stomach isn’t really empty. Feeling bad, I decided not to eat. The maid with the birdcage looked sad again. Sorry about that.

I was given a bath again and went to sleep while it was still bright outside.

# Chapter 37 - Cardinal

“When speaking of fairies, they are considered sacred beings that also appear in myths. If the fairy is to stay in this town, wouldn’t it be reasonable for them to stay at the church?”

The youngest cardinal in the country speaks up.

As one of the three cardinals in this country, I have begun discussions with the other two cardinals. Since His Holiness the Pope is in the holy nation, the three of us essentially become the top figures of the “Bridge” faction in this country. We have the responsibility to deal with the issues that arise in this country.

“What are you saying? We shouldn’t be welcoming fairies or anything of the sort. Fairy beliefs are pagan. Rather, fairies should be excluded!”

The opinions of the two cardinals are in direct opposition. I don’t have a strong desire to get involved. Seeing the commotion in the town the day before yesterday, it seems impossible to control such entities. It would only lead to unnecessary chaos.

And to even consider exclusion is out of the question. Since the appearance of that fairy, various miracles have already occurred. It would be ill-advised to try to exclude it now; it might provoke resentment. Somehow, I need to persuade these two and make the church take a stance of observing silently...

“However, considering the various miracles that the fairy has already performed, such power should rightfully belong to the church.”

“Now, now, let’s calm down. Rushing into action won’t make things any better.”

I speak up. The convictions of the two seem quite strong. By not siding with either of them, it prevents them from reaching a consensus,

leaving the matter unresolved. To maintain a stance of observation, that's probably the best way forward.

“But you see, the fairy is a guest of the princess. If we act hastily, it will deepen the divide with the royal family.”

We can't ignore the royal family either. The worst outcome would be to make both the fairy and the royal family enemies.

At that moment, a slightly aggressive knock echoes through the room where the three of us are.

“What is it? Is something wrong?”

I ask as a middle-aged priest hurriedly opens the door.

“W-Well, the fairy has come to visit the church... they're flying around inside!”

It seems that it's not so easy to maintain a stance of observation. The disturbance has come to us...

“What did you say!? And what do you think the sacred church is for? This is exactly why the existence of pagans is problematic!”

Uh-oh, this guy's gotten carried away. His temper has clearly flared up. But I can't ignore this situation. Maybe I should go and see for myself.

When we arrive at the chapel, most of the members of the church have gathered there. This is bad; some of them are even offering prayers to the fairy.

“You people! Offering prayers to a pagan entity? You're advocating heresy!”

“Now, now, let’s calm down.”

My stomach aches. I said the same thing just a while ago, but the situation is far more serious now.

“Is this what you call being calm? Unbelievable! You pagan entity! Let me take care of you right here!”

Oh no, this is bad. Despite receiving instructions from the castle to treat the fairy as a guest of the princess with respect, this guy is now raising his staff to strike the fairy.

“Please wait, please wait!”

One of the younger cardinals restrains the agitated cardinal.

He indicates the exit to the fairy, asking them to leave. If they were to stay longer in this situation, the situation would only get worse. I can only manage a wry smile at this point. Thankfully, the fairy obediently leaves... but being seen by the lower members like this is not good...

...Well, whatever.

## **Chapter 38 - Struggles (Before)**

While I was in the midst of guiding the fairy into the room within the birdcage, I was appointed as the exclusive caretaker for the fairy. Perhaps my neutral stance was convenient in this situation.

After setting up the birdcage in the room, the fairy seemed quite delighted as it swung the suspended cage. Truly adorable.

Having never taken care of anyone other than humans, I felt quite uneasy. However, I thought I could manage with this.

At that moment, I believed so.

I started to feel anxious again when I served tea. Firstly, the teacup was too large. But there were no teacups in the castle that were the size of the fairy, so I had no choice.

Surprisingly, the fairy brought out a tiny cup that suited them and tried to scoop tea into it. However, it seemed they couldn't drink from it. Upon closer inspection, I realized that the tea was forming a little sphere within the cup, preventing it from pouring out.

The fairy attempted to drink the tea somehow, sticking their face into the cup like a dog, but perhaps it was too hot, and they failed. It was at this point that I began to think that taking care of a non-human was extremely difficult.

"Moreover, we need a dress for the audience with His Majesty," the princess said.

"That's not all; we must also show the nobles that we are serious. Prepare several dresses for each season. We must demonstrate to the nobles that we are treating the fairy with great importance."

And so, that day ended after taking measurements.

The next day, as I pondered how to proceed with the morning care, I peeked at the birdcage to find that the fairy was already gone. The previous issues, such as how to care for them, came back to haunt me. I promptly reported to the princess.

The princess decided to send a search party into the town, but I didn't join them. I had my own responsibilities. Let the experts handle the search.

I visited a dressmaker in the rain. The city was jubilant due to the rain that had started yesterday, with people so happy it seemed as though today was a festival. Some were even dancing joyfully while soaking wet.

Upon requesting a dress for the fairy from the dressmaker, I received

an immediate reply that it was impossible.

“Wow, miss, this is too small. There’s no way we can do this.”

“Then where might it be possible?”

“Hmm, where indeed. How about asking a dollmaker?”

“I see, then I’ll do just that.”

When I arrived at the doll shop, I looked around the interior and noticed that all the dolls placed there were about the size of my lap. They were too large. The fairy was palm-sized.

After negotiating, it seemed that making the dress was possible, but the tea set and tableware were too small to manage.

“Nobody in this capital can make cups this size. They’re so thin, they’ll break easily. Honestly, I have no idea how this cup is still intact.”

The owner of the doll shop was quite impressed when he saw the fairy’s tea cup.

I gave up on preparing the tea cup and urgently requested the dress to be made before returning to the palace.

On my way back, I saw a statue being drenched by the rain in the central square. It was a statue of the first king, and the intricate details seemed to have been faithfully reproduced. I realized that ceramics weren’t necessary. I visited a sculptor.

“Do you want me to sculpt this tiny cup?” I asked.

“Indeed. Is it impossible?”



“Hmm, well, if you ask whether it’s impossible, I can’t help but want to replicate it no matter what.”

“Then please prepare a complete tea set and tableware. Including forks, knives, and other cutlery.”

“Eager, aren’t you? But I’ll figure something out for you.”

“Thank you.”

Returning to the palace, the atmosphere inside was once again in turmoil. Just like yesterday, news spread that the fairy was flying around inside the palace. I joined the search within the palace. The fairy was innocently swimming in the bath, creating huge splashes.

Afterward, when the fairy’s whereabouts remained unknown, they had returned to the birdcage themselves. The princess was furious, but I felt somewhat relieved.

The fairy recognized this place as their home.

Taking care of someone unlike humans is indeed challenging, but if they recognize this place as home, perhaps we can somehow manage.

## **Chapter 39 - Struggles (Middle)**

Yesterday, the queen’s illness was miraculously cured. It seems it was a curse.

Early the next morning, on the third day since the fairy arrived at the palace, I, under the orders of the princess, carried the still sleeping fairy to the salon. This was for the tea party hosted by the queen.

The fairy eagerly pounced on the cookies served at the tea party, but they seemed too hard to eat comfortably. To provide something softer and thinner for the fairy to enjoy, I needed to come up with a solution. Simply making them softer might cause them to crumble. I made a mental note to consult with the kitchen staff later.

After the tea party ended, the fairy disappeared once again. The princess was very worried if the fairy would return, but I wasn't concerned. Most likely, the fairy would have already returned to the birdcage today, unnoticed.

However, waiting all the time during the fairy's absence was quite inefficient. I wanted to prepare the surroundings according to the fairy's size, but I couldn't leave the room since I didn't know when the fairy would come back.

Therefore, I requested additional assistance.

A new maid was assigned as an assistant. She was young but neutral and free, and apparently there was no one else who could handle some tasks to a certain extent.

Since there weren't many tasks to be done, it shouldn't be a problem. Her main duty was to wait when I wasn't present. In addition to that, I assigned her to clean the fairy's room and take care of their bath.

Bathing the fairy was an important task. While the palace's grand bath had now become a sanctuary, its effects would diminish over time. Regularly having the fairy take baths would help maintain the effect.

After the fairy bathed, the queen was scheduled to use the bath. If the queen continued to use it regularly, her beauty might reach astonishing heights.

Even the noble ladies, with keen ears, have inquired whether they could use it. It's surprising how quickly word has spread.

Since the palace's grand bath was originally intended for nobles working in the palace, it's difficult to refuse. Although the royal family could use their designated bath, it might raise some concerns if we restrict the access. Well, in that case, the fairy would also use the designated royal bath.

After providing some guidance to the newly appointed assistant, I headed to the sculptor's workshop to check on the dishes I had

requested for the fairy.

It seemed that the entire workshop was mobilized for this task, and various dishes, including teacups, had been formed in just one day.

“You’ve worked hard. I’ve heard a fairy has visited the palace. Are these dishes indeed for the fairy?” the workshop owner inquired. The fairy had caused quite a commotion in the town; it would be impossible to keep it hidden.

“Yes, that’s correct. Now, let’s try these cups right away.”

“Try them? I’ve been asked for various shapes for the cups... Some of these shapes are quite unusual. What’s the meaning behind this?”

“You’ll understand once we pour some water into them. The key is whether the fairy can use them.”

I started placing a drop of water into several of the cups that had been made. Since they were all small, a single drop was sufficient.

I tilted the cup with the most common shape. Indeed, the water didn’t pour out easily even when tilted. Just like when the fairy couldn’t drink tea properly, the water was forming a sphere inside the cup.

When I tilted the cup further, all the water inside flowed out at once. Unless the fairy could drink the entire cupful in one go, it would likely spill all over them.

“I see, it does seem quite difficult to use.”

After trying various cups, it appeared that cups with deeper bottoms and smaller diameters had less water flowing out.

Shallower, wider cups, similar to soup bowls, seemed to let water flow out more easily, but even they caused the entire drop to pour out at once.

“It’s unfortunate. It seems there are no cups here that can withstand the fairy’s use.”

“That’s right, quite a challenging request...”

I requested the fairy to study the shape of the teacup they could drink from and collected the other finished dishes. The cutlery was still in the process of being made, so I arranged for them to be delivered to the palace at a later date.

With these small dishes collected, I brought them to the workshop of a skilled dish craftsman. These dishes were carved from a pliable stone that was hard to break, and their appearance retained the texture of the stone itself. I requested the dish craftsmen to decorate these small dishes with a white background and gold trim, emphasizing their practical use.

That night, as I had anticipated, the fairy returned safely.

## **Chapter 40 - Struggles (Conclusion)**

Two days later, miraculously, the dress was ready for the audience.

I managed to prevent the fairy from going outside as usual. If they were to disappear today, it might mean that I would lose my position or be dismissed.

I could see the members of the Second Knights departing from the window. This year, with the rain falling, the influence of the “Twin Gods” was expected to be significant. To mitigate this influence, they were heading to the port city, which was anticipated to be the most affected. The fairy was observing the departure of the knights.

After ensuring the fairy stayed indoors, the owner of the doll shop and the seamstresses arrived. We hurriedly dressed the fairy in the prepared dress and took new measurements to tailor seasonal dresses. These specialized seamstresses were impressive; while I had only measured their height and waist in my previous attempt, they had measured even the size of the fairy’s fingers.

After the successful audience, and once the fairy had disappeared again, I managed to learn about their activities in the city. Surprisingly, they had been eating meat. It appears that they do indeed require sustenance...

Around that time, well-decorated dishes were also delivered. Therefore, I was busy preparing the fairy's dinner. I collected the cutlery that hadn't arrived yet, delivered the fairy's dishes to the kitchen, and discussed the meal options with the head chef.

"A dinner for the fairy? Can you really prepare dishes that fit on these tiny plates?" The head chef's language could be a bit crude, but his culinary skills were undoubtedly exceptional. Furthermore, he had a knack for using polished language when addressing nobility, so I knew that he wasn't just rough.

"Yes, we will prepare the dinner from this evening's offerings."

"But it's almost evening already. You're planning to prepare something now without any prior arrangements?"

"It won't be a problem. Simply collecting the ends of the regular dishes should suffice to make a complete dish."

"Well, I suppose that's true. So, what will the fairy be eating?"

I wondered, what would the fairy eat? Considering that they had been eating meat in the city, are they carnivorous?

The image of the fairy that I had from the fairy tales seemed to be crumbling. The fairy tales had suggested that fairies consumed things like flower nectar, but I never thought they would be carnivorous.

But wait, they also ate cookies, didn't they? So, they must be omnivores, just like humans.

"It's fine if it's similar to what humans eat. Can you prepare something like the royal family's meal?"

“Well, sure. Ingredients won’t be much of an issue, and it’s feasible. But the presentation... how are you going to arrange it on these tiny plates? A single drop of sauce could easily spill over the edge.”

“Think creatively. You could use tweezers to arrange the food, and as for the sauce, you can apply it delicately with a brush.”

“Hmm, if you’re saying that much, you better lend a hand too.”

After a series of efforts between the head chef and me, we managed to prepare the fairy’s dinner. As the cups were still a work in progress, we unfortunately couldn’t offer any drinks.

“Well, you’ve done quite well. I’ve learned a thing or two. But how are you going to transport this? If we put it on a tray, it’s bound to spill.”

“You’re right. We’ll have to carry it on a serving tray. And given their small size, the dishes might cool down quickly. I believe there’s a magical tool with a warming function. Could we allocate one for the exclusive use of the fairy?”

“Oh well, I guess you’re right. This time, you can borrow it from me. As for exclusive allocation, that’s beyond my authority, so make sure to get approval later.”

“Thank you.”

I carried the dinner carefully. How would the fairy react? I had to observe closely what they ate, how they ate it, and any difficulties they faced. This information would be invaluable for the future.

With great anticipation, I presented the fairy’s dinner.

The fairy... didn’t eat a single bite.

# Chapter 41 - Breakfast

When I woke up, breakfast was ready.

There was bread, soup, scrambled eggs, and some mysterious pieces of meat. Plus a salad. The soup seemed to be simmered with herbs, containing bits of some kind of greens and bacon.

As I attempted to sip the soup, I found myself being attended to first. An apprentice maid used a damp cloth to wipe my face. They didn't quite get the right amount of pressure, just lightly patting me, which felt a bit ticklish. They could have applied a bit more force, or rather, much more force.

The exposed parts of my body were swiftly wiped as well.

Next, a stick with thread wound around its tip was inserted into my mouth. Mmfff... what's this? Tooth brushing?

Is this the toothbrush in this country? Or is it a substitute because they couldn't provide a toothbrush my size? Either way, it doesn't seem like a malicious prank.

The apprentice maid indicated for me to open my mouth vertically. I imitated her and opened my mouth that way. The stick entered the back of my front teeth. Ouch, it's pricking my gums! Ughhh...

After that ordeal, I finally stood in front of my breakfast. On the human-sized table, where the birdcage was placed, there was a small box acting as a desk for me. On top of that, a tiny breakfast was set up. In front of the makeshift desk, there was an even smaller box functioning as a chair. I sat on the chair-box and examined the breakfast.

It seemed like something you'd find in an upscale restaurant, with spoons and forks neatly arranged on either side of the dishes. Is this

alright? I don't really know proper table manners, to be honest. Well, I can eat however I want, right?

I picked up a small spoon and scooped up some soup. Just like before, the soup formed a droplet on the spoon, or rather, a soup droplet? I put the droplet to my mouth and sucked it in. I see, this way you can drink hot liquids too, as long as you can tolerate the slight warmth in your mouth.

The bacon was cut into tiny pieces, making it easy to eat. Mmngng, it's still rather mild in flavor, but the saltiness is quite nice. For hearty eating, there's the Adventurer's Guild, for refined enjoyment, it's the royal palace. What luxurious eating habits! Long live, royal pet!

Alright, next is the scrambled eggs. I continued using the spoon I had for the soup to serve the scrambled eggs. They were wobbly, and the spoon had trouble penetrating them. Is it because these scrambled eggs are too gooey, like slime, or is it yet another inconvenience caused by the size difference? I started leaning towards the latter.

Most of the dishes were structured to be just right for human consumption. The large air bubbles in the scrambled eggs and the spoon being a bit too thick for an ordinary spoon were exceptions. But I shouldn't be confined by conventional thinking. This world has magic. Swiftly scoop, and delicious.

Ah, this mysterious meat is probably a piece of sausage. Maybe they took a bit of sausage because they couldn't provide a sausage my size. There's a bit of the casing still attached. Hm, with normal-sized sausages, it's great to bite into the casing for a satisfying crunch, but with my size... maybe it's difficult. In that case, bacon might be a better option...

No, no, let's appreciate that I can eat at all. I shouldn't complain about how the bubbles in the bread are bigger than my fingernails, or how it's difficult to eat. I'm getting free care for my clothing, food, and shelter in this unfamiliar world.

When I think about it, it's truly a blessing. And the salad's fiber-like texture flooding my mouth with water when I chew is no cause for



complaint. Woof, woof!

As I glanced up, the birdcage maid was happily taking notes. I wonder if she's recording observations about the pet?

There are people who become utterly delighted just by watching their pets eat, aren't there? By the way, the apprentice maid was already gone. Maybe she went to tidy up the grooming set or something.

With that, I headed outside for the day. The water level in the river seemed to have risen again. It hasn't been raining, though... Is it raining upstream? I wonder how high the water level will rise. I'm starting to get a bit worried about the kids who used that precarious spot as their secret base.

Alright, today I'll start by checking on the state of the secret base.

## Chapter 42 - Investigation Report

“Thus, we propose allowing the fairies to revitalize the city! Fairy-themed merchandise, fairy cookies, and more, all with the fairy emblem stamped on them. Isn’t that splendid, Guildmaster?”

“Ah, we’re not discussing that right now.”

While in the middle of receiving an interim report about the fairy investigation, the guildmaster of the Commercial Guild paid a visit in person. What’s up with this guy visiting the Adventurer’s Guild?

“No, no, it’s still related to fairies, isn’t it? It’s also about the fairy topic.”

“We were talking about the ecology of the fairies and their potential impacts.”

“That’s right, we’re discussing the impact of the fairies. The current state of the capital’s economy is nothing short of dire.

If we wholeheartedly promote the fairies, we could attract tourists, traders, and even bards. The benefits are immeasurable; there’s no time to dawdle. We must make the most of their presence and what we can do while they’re here!”

He’s launching into another spiel again. This is exactly why I’m not fond of purebred merchants.

“Ah, well, if we had started a bit earlier, we could have attracted more tourists in conjunction with the ‘Twin Gods’

phenomenon,” the guildmaster mused.

“That’s right, the ‘Twin Gods’ influence is also a factor. Right now, we can’t afford to focus on tourism or city development. And why on earth did you come to the Adventurer’s Guild anyway?”

“That’s right, why the Adventurer’s Guild? We’ve been eagerly waiting for the fairies to visit the Commercial Guild as well, but I heard they’ve already been here twice. How did you manage to attract them?”

“I’m here to ask about that. I don’t know any of that stuff. They came on their own, caused a ruckus, and left on their own. I met them once too, but they just fled when I tried to talk to them.”

It doesn’t seem like he had any substantial reason for coming here. He should be leaving soon... However, what he’s saying isn’t entirely wrong. This proposal indeed sounds advantageous for the Adventurer’s Guild as well. Bringing some liveliness to the city would be beneficial. But not now, we can’t do anything until the influence of the ‘Twins’ subsides.

“I see, I understand. So, how far have your investigations progressed?”

“I’m not going to tell you right now. Please leave already. I get it, using the fairies for city development. Got it. But not right now. We can’t act until the ‘Twins’ influence fades.”

“That’s unfortunate. In that case, we’ll have to continue working on our end. Well then, I’ll take my leave.”

“Yeah, see you.”

Phew, he’s finally leaving...

“So, Zanten, continue the report?”

I turned to Zanten, who had been waiting on the side, urging him to continue with the report on the fairy investigation.

“The guildmaster sure has a tough time, huh? Oh, where was I? Right, so the fairies seem to be flying around like they’re sightseeing. That’s the general idea.”

“Really? Is it even possible for fairies to be visiting human cities for sightseeing? I’ve never heard of such a thing.”

The Adventurer’s Guild is an organization that spans countries, so we receive information from other nations as well. But I’ve never heard any reports of fairies visiting cities for tourism.

“Indeed, that’s the case. Fairies haven’t been known to visit cities, let alone confirmed to exist until now, right?”

True, while they appear in stories and myths, I don’t recall any reports about them from the guild’s records.

“Anyway, look at these.”

Saying that, Zanten took out several small stick-like objects. Are those knives and forks? Plus a sword and a spear?

“Their small size... Could these be tools used by the fairies?”

“Exactly. All of these were used by that fairy during her meal at the guild’s tavern.”

“Oh, right, she was eating meat. Maybe if the Commercial Guild started hanging up meat, the fairies would come. But, why the sword and spear? Did she use them to eat meat?”

“It seems so. She didn’t have a knife or fork with her until just before she started eating meat. Then suddenly, she had them from somewhere, or maybe she made them on the spot... It’s the same with the sword and spear. According to Duster, who works at the tavern, they said the fairy used them as well.”

Duster, that guy who’s always drinking at the tavern.

“Well, the problem isn’t whether she used swords or spears to eat meat, it’s about the sharpness of these things.”

“Huh? Sharpness?”

“Exactly. These can cut extremely well. Watch.”

Saying that, Zanten held a piece of dried meat in his left hand and moved a tiny sword held between his right thumb and index finger downwards. And look, the dried meat was neatly sliced in half. He hadn’t exerted any particular force either.

“See? It’s incredible. Without any pulling or pushing motion, the sword simply moved along the meat.”

“Really?”

“Absolutely, it’s amazing. And not only that, this tiny sword can cut with such precision, even though there’s no resistance in the motion.”

“Seriously?”

“Yeah, for real. And what’s more, despite their small size...”

Saying that, Zanten nonchalantly tapped the small sword against a rock.

“See? The small size, the thinness, and yet the sharpness. But it’s incredibly strong. This thing’s dangerous, isn’t it?”

Zanten continued gazing at the sword while saying this.

“That fairy, she didn’t have a knife or fork until just before she ate. She suddenly got them from somewhere, or maybe she created them on the spot... It’s the same with the sword and spear. If this sword was made for a human-sized person...”

“This is bad... Hey, keep this to yourself, got it?”

I cautioned Zanten. He’s specialized in investigation missions. He’s not the type to go around revealing things he’s learned during missions, but if this information spreads, it could be trouble.

“Sure, sure, I get it. And, well, I also reported this earlier, but the fairy seems to be coming from beyond the noble district.”

“Right, the royal palace. She’s being treated as a guest of the First Princess.”

“Seems that way. So, I wanted to investigate that side as well. Could we get permission to enter the noble district?”

“Huh? Do we really need to investigate that too?”

I don’t really want to mess with the noble district or the royal palace...

“Yeah, I heard this from the guards. Part of the palace has been sanctified, and saint crystals, spirit stones, and spirit elixirs are growing in abundance there.”

“What?!”

Saint crystals, spirit stones, and spirit elixirs are ultra-rare materials that are usually only found in high-level dragon nests or the sanctuaries of spirits. If these things can be found within the city limits, the world might change!

“See? It’s dangerous, right? I think it

‘s a good idea to investigate.”

“Yeah, you’re right... But hold off for a while. Obtaining permission to enter the noble district won’t be easy, especially for investigative purposes. We might have to make something up.”

“I suppose you’re right... It’s easier to enter if we receive a request from the nobles, though.”

“Yeah, for now, let’s focus on the aftermath of the ‘Twins’ incident.”

“Okay, got it.”

Damn it. Even though it might not bring direct profits... if we’re not careful, this could lead to a major conflict. I scratched my head while watching Zanten leave.

## Chapter 43 - On the River

I flew over the city gates and headed towards the river from above.

Both small and medium-sized boats, as well as functional vessels, all seemed to be heading towards the river. Even the smaller boats that hadn't started moving yet were bustling with people preparing to set sail.

From downstream, I could see boats arriving one after another. Were these the boats that had been loaded up a little while ago and were now returning? It seems like there's quite a congestion here.

The larger boats were being pulled up onto the land with logs underneath them. I wonder if they're getting ready for maintenance or if they're waiting for the water levels to rise a bit more before setting sail. They seemed to be lined up, with many people involved in the process.

Amidst the various sizes of boats, I took a moment to peek at the secret base the children showed me two days ago.

Hmm, seems like nobody's here now. That's a relief. The secret base is located inside an arched structure resembling a drainage channel, slightly elevated from the riverbed. There are channels for water to flow even within the arched structure, so the spot the children were playing in seems to always remain above the water. Judging from the discoloration of the stones around, it seems this place rarely gets submerged.

Well, they're local kids, so it's probably not a play area that frequently gets flooded. I might have been overly concerned.

However, just to be cautious, I decided to investigate the surroundings. First, I should find out where this drainage channel leads. It's probably connected to the underground waterways I visited before...



Following it, I indeed found that it was connected to the underground waterways I explored before. I confirmed it with the map.

For now, let's head out to the city through the nearest exit. Huh, so when it rains, the surrounding water flows into this channel, I see.

As I wandered through the city, I noticed that there were several small rivers connected to the underground waterways throughout the city. They were lined with grass and blooming flowers. Above them was a medieval-like townscape. Oh, it has a charming atmosphere! The water's surface reflects the sunlight, creating a beautiful sight.

When I approached the water's edge, the sky and the bridges were reflected on the water, giving me a sensation of being above the sky. Well, I can actually fly above the sky now, but it feels different in its own way. Up there, the wind is strong and cold...

I wonder if there are fish here. It might not have had water until recently, considering it was the dry season before. I couldn't spot any fish.

While tracing the waterways through the town, I once again headed towards the eastern side of the river. Huh, there aren't many direct connections from the surface to the river...

Observing the city, the eastern side seems quite bustling. It's busy over there, probably due to all the boat activities.

Huh? Is it just my imagination, or am I being followed? Come to think of it, the sense of malevolence in the city has considerably lessened, and I thought I was finally being accepted. However, there's a sense of malevolence trailing behind me...

Sure enough, I realized that someone was persistently following me. Looking back, I could see them hiding in the shadows. Haha, are they trying to hide? I can see through objects, you know.

Hmm, it's a slightly slender middle-aged man. He's probably an

adventurer based on his attire. Surprisingly, he might have a bit of a slim yet muscular build. He looks somewhat familiar. Was he at the Adventurer's Guild?

But goodness, his malevolence is intense. Not the cute kind of malevolence that's like, "I'll make use of you," but a strong, intense malevolence. That slender adventurer is definitely one to watch out for. But there's nothing I can do about it, and for now, it's best to leave him be until he makes a move. Today, I want to check out the situation on the river anyway.

As I made my way towards the eastern gate, people in the city waved at me with smiles. Oh, it seems my watchful observation from a distance has finally turned into a friendly reception. I waved back with a smile. Hey there, it's the fairy, isn't it? Look closely, I'm quite the rarity! Oh, is that lady over there having back pain? I should help her with that.

\*boop\* Oh, cookies? Are you giving them to me? Yay!

I enjoyed the cookies while heading towards the eastern gate to reach the river. The view of the towering mountain to the south indicated that the starting point was probably that mountain. But the clouds hadn't covered the mountain yet. It doesn't seem to be raining on the river.

These cookies are a bit crumbly, but they're easier to chew and eat. It'd be even better if they were a little sweeter though.

Hmm, it seems that the slender adventurer from earlier has stopped pursuing me around the time I confirmed that I was heading to the river. He probably couldn't follow me while I was flying over the river. Hehehe.

People on the boats heading towards the river also waved at me. There's an old man pointing and excitedly talking about me. Oh, oh, you're doing great! Look, it's the fairy, what do you think? Unusual, right? Oh, that boat seems to have some damage! Let me fix it for you. \*boop\* I'm the fairy, after all!

I kept passing boats and continued towards the river. After a while, I came across something like a boat elevator! I know what that is! I've seen it in tourist magazines!

The boat elevator traps several boats between water gates, making it seem like they're enclosed. As you watch, the water level rises gradually, aligning with the water level of the river. Then, the gates on the river side open, and the boats start ascending the river. Oh, I wonder how they manage to adjust the water level?

Beyond that, there appeared to be a city. The river seemed to have been artificially widened, with many boats moored there. I could see numerous boats unloading cargo.

Alright, I think I've got a general understanding of the surroundings. The map automatically updates and displays the information up to this point. The castle is facing south, and I can see the mountains from my room, so I should keep an eye on the clouds covering the mountains just in case. The map also shows the real-time water level on the river.

Okay, time to head back. The cookies are all gone too.

Once I'm back, it'll probably already be night...

# Chapter 44 - Mysterious Sounds

Several days have passed since the day I went to check the river.

Even after that day, I continued to explore various places in the city and played with the children.

Once, the Birdcage Maid brought a bunch of cards with writing on them, clearly trying to get me to study. However, I ran away with all my might, and she didn't try to make me study again after that. Learning a new language is too much for me, especially since I can barely handle English...

So, today, as I was about to head out into the city, the Birdcage Maid suddenly became flustered. I recognized this behavior—she's doing that strange dance when she doesn't want me to go outside. Well, I guess I can go along with it.

I should play with my owner once in a while too. Frankly, considering my situation, I can't really complain even if I get kicked out at any moment. Woof woof.

Now then, after the odd dance from last time resulted in a bunch of dresses appearing, what will it be this time? Could it be another new dress, since they measured me before? Even though I think there won't be many opportunities for me to wear them...

But as I was wondering, a group of unfamiliar older men arrived. And following them, Do-Up-sama also appeared.

These men brought various things into the room, and the leader among them, Mr. Leader, started showing me things one by one.

Oh, cookies with fairy imprints? Can I eat them? Hooray, Mr. Leader seems like a good person!

Then the Birdcage Maid brought out a small teacup. What's this? It contains tea, but there are incisions on the cup. The incisions go all the way to the bottom, but the tea doesn't spill out due to surface tension...?

Hmm? Could it be because I couldn't drink tea before, they specially designed this cup for me? Probably, you're supposed to sip the tea from these incisions. Ah, I see! Just like when I drink soup, I scoop up the soup with a spoon and then sip it.

So that's how this tea cup was born. Quite a creative idea.

It's a bit challenging to drink, but since I'm used to sipping soup, I had no problem drinking it. I also enjoyed the cookies.

Oh? These cookies are sweet! These are good, really good cookies! Nice job, Mr. Leader!

Mr. Leader had a smile on his face. If the pet is happy with the treats the owner provides, the owner will be happy too.

That's probably how he feels.

As I continued, Mr. Leader showed me something else. This time, it was a wooden box with a fairy pattern carved on it.

When Mr. Leader opened the box, music started playing. Ah, I see, it's a music box.

Perhaps my reaction wasn't quite as he expected, because Mr. Leader started speaking in a hurried manner. His smile didn't change, but his gestures became faster, revealing his anxiety.

Hmm? I see, I don't quite understand. For now, I just nodded in agreement. Yes, yes. And then, Mr. Leader looked very happy. It seems my reaction was the correct one. Do-Up-sama also looked pleased, holding the wooden box in her hands.

After that, Mr. Leader continued showing me various things, gesturing and talking to me. I didn't really understand, but when I nodded, he

seemed delighted. Yes, it makes me happy to see them happy. If just nodding makes them this happy, then I'm more than willing to keep nodding.

Every time I nodded, not just Mr. Leader but also the other men behind him and Do-Up-sama, they all looked happy too.

Sigh, is this what it feels like to be a dog learning new tricks? When told to "sit," you sit, and everyone is delighted. Well, if someone tells you to sit, you're going to sit, right?

After playing around with Mr. Leader for a while, he seemed satisfied and left. However, even after we disbanded, Do-Up-sama came by again in the afternoon.

And then, the seamstresses who had come before arrived again, and the dress-changing session for new dresses began.

Ah, I see, so that's what today is all about. I guess I better not plan on going out today.

The dresses come in both light and heavy versions. Summer and winter editions, perhaps? Last time, all the dresses had loose, fluttering sleeves, but this time, there were some with tighter sleeves. On the other hand, there were sleeveless ones too. What's consistent is that they all have open backs.

Well, since I have wings, I guess they thought the backs need to be open. But I realized something about these wings when I lay on my back—my wings can pass through things. So there's no real need for the back of the dress to be open.

Even with a closed-back dress, I can still stretch my wings without any problem.

As I went through dress changes, Do-Up-sama and the seamstresses continued to cheer excitedly. I wonder if the silver-haired girl won't be coming today?

Before I knew it, the outside had turned a crimson color. Huh, I wonder how long this will last? Just as I was thinking that, I heard it suddenly.

At first, it was a “shhh” sound.

And it gradually grew louder, turning into a “whoosh” sound, and then a “zzzz!” And then it escalated into a thunderous

“zzzzzzzz!” akin to an earthquake!

What, what, what? Is something wrong? But neither the Birdcage Maid nor Do-Up-sama nor the seamstresses seemed surprised.

No, no, but something’s definitely odd. Even though I was still wearing a dress, I went to the window. The Birdcage Maid tried to block me with her strange dance, but I went through without minding her. Sorry about that.

When I stepped outside, I witnessed an unbelievable sight.

# Chapter 45 - Negotiation

Surprisingly, a few days ago, the Fairy Queen visited this royal capital.

As members of the Commercial Guild, we are very eager to seize this opportunity to boost the city's economy with the presence of the Fairy Queen. After all, she's the Fairy Queen – a mythical figure that was previously thought to exist only in legends and storybooks, and adored by both children and adults alike. Creating merchandise based on her is an opportunity that's too good to miss. The potential for success is undeniable.

When we sought permission from the castle to sell items related to the Fairy Queen, we received a surprisingly easy response – if the Fairy Queen approves, then it's good to go.

So, we quickly prepared a variety of Fairy Queen-themed products and made arrangements to present them to her.

Unfortunately, due to the rush, we couldn't create more intricate items.

We had cookies imprinted with fairy designs, music boxes featuring carvings of fairies and flowers on pre-existing models, and similar items.

Considering the limited number of people allowed in the castle, we carefully selected our team. Two of them are my promising apprentices, one is a painter, and the last is a sculptor. We hope to decorate the city with fairy sculptures and sell paintings to the nobles. The Deputy Guild Master was complaining about why I couldn't go, but I needed to stay behind to handle things in her absence.

Recently, we also approached the Adventurer's Guild with this idea, but the Guild Master didn't react positively. This year's "Twin Gods" phenomenon is expected to be particularly intense, so I suppose they have their reasons.



The Second Knights Brigade has departed for the port city that will likely suffer the most from the upcoming phenomenon. The First Knights Brigade is already stationed at the eastern border. While not all members are absent, the situation in the capital is such that both brigades are unavailable.

If the effects of the “Twin Gods” phenomenon reach the capital, the Adventurer’s Guild will likely be busy. It’s quite coincidental that the day we can meet the Fairy Queen is the same day the phenomenon starts. If the city is hit by the disaster while some of its protectors are away, it would indeed be worrisome.

And so, the five of us were led to the Fairy Queen’s chamber. Indeed, she was there – the Fairy Queen herself!

“Oh my, what an adorable and beautiful presence!”

Not just her appearance, but the faintly glowing particles dancing around her were also mesmerizing. This was the true Fairy Queen, in the flesh. The artists among us were itching to sketch her on the spot, but our purpose here was as merchants, not artists. Sketching would have to wait.

“Ah, yes, of course. These wings, for example, change color depending on the angle you look at them. Just like watching a rainbow.”

Even the Queen was present, watching the Fairy Queen with a delighted expression.

“Such a charming fairy and our lovely Queen – what a picturesque scene. I must capture it in a painting.”

This was no mere flattery; the Fairy Queen was genuinely beautiful. The Queen seemed even younger than when I last saw her.

“Oh, your words are quite eloquent. But, of course, it’s all thanks to the Fairy Queen.”

“Hehe, thank you. And, you know, I’ve been bathing in the water that the Fairy Queen bathes in. The effects are truly remarkable. Aches and pains disappear, and my skin feels so smooth. It’s truly wonderful.”

“Indeed, I’ve heard that the Fairy Queen’s presence can heal old wounds. But to think it also has beauty benefits!”

“Yes, it’s really surprising.”

Even the tea set used by the Fairy Queen was extremely small. Did they prepare this set within the past few days? Given its size, any ordinary cup would break easily. Our information network didn’t include any details about such items being made, but...

“Hmm, it seems the cup is more than just small. There’s a deep groove in one spot. Ah, and it’s designed for drinking tea without spilling it, I presume?”

Indeed, the presence of this groove indicated that even with such a small cup, tea wouldn’t spill.

“Very perceptive. With a cup this size, the tea tends to form a rounded shape and doesn’t spill, as you can see.”

“I see, you deliberately made this groove to make it easier for the Fairy Queen to drink.”

The royal palace seems to be managing the Fairy Queen’s visit far more effectively than we anticipated. Without the direct involvement and cooperation of the Fairy Queen herself, these innovations wouldn’t have been possible. They’ve managed to establish a smooth communication channel with her...

We, too, must not be outdone. We need to negotiate well with the Fairy Queen. She’s busy enjoying the cookies right now.

“Fairy Queen, how about this? We’d like to introduce these cookies as a specialty of the royal capital. Could we have your permission for

that?”

She seems deeply engrossed in eating the cookies. Let’s wait for a moment.

While we wait, let’s prepare the next item.

“Alright, next, let’s bring out the music box.”

One of my apprentices quickly presents a music box adorned with the Fairy Queen’s likeness. After seeing the real Fairy Queen, this decorative piece pales in comparison. We’ll need to refine the design before selling it. The sculptor who worked on this item seems to share the same sentiment; he had a troubled expression.

“Fairy Queen, next up is this item...”

I open the lid of the music box and a melody starts playing. The tune is from a play based on a long-standing myth in this country, featuring a scene where the Fairy Queen makes an appearance. However, it seems like the Fairy Queen isn’t connecting with the tune.

“We’ve included a carving of your likeness on this music box. We’d also like to sell this alongside the cookies, but we need your permission.”

The Fairy Queen doesn’t react.

“Yes, yes, certainly. We would be more than willing to offer you a share of the profits as well. How about 20% of the sales revenue?”

She nodded! This is incredible. The Fairy Queen has high standards. She’s well aware of financial matters!

In our previous information, we speculated that the Fairy Queen might have different values from human society, but it appears she

has a clear understanding of monetary matters.

We continue showing her various items and seeking permission to sell them. She doesn't just nod when presented with the items; it's only when I explain the terms of the trade agreement that she nods.

I'm surprised. The Fairy Queen seems to possess a solid understanding of economics. When faced with vague explanations, she occasionally tilts her head. When I provide more detailed information, she immediately nods. I'm truly impressed.

With that, we obtained her permission to sell the items. The payment for the merchandise will be sent to the castle on a quarterly basis. And so, we left the chamber.

This is a significant chance to revitalize the royal capital. The Commercial Guild must work together to make the most of this opportunity. I'm ready to give it my all.

# Chapter 46 - Collecting Mementos

“Why can’t I go? Why can’t I go?”

I confronted my father angrily.

\*Sigh\*... How many times have I explained this? The “Twin God” phenomena will happen soon. The river will flood, so stay away. Stay home today, alright?”

That’s not fair! Last year, the Twin God phenomena happened too, but nothing like flooding ever occurred!”

True, last year and the year before that, there was no flooding at the secret base. Even if the river does flood, the secret base should be safe.

“You remember, right? You helped with unloading and loading cargo from the ships. You saw how all the ships from the capital were evacuating. It’s really dangerous. Did we evacuate ships last year or the year before that?”

Yeah, that’s right. All the ships that could move from the capital went upriver by yesterday. Even the big ones that couldn’t move were pulled out of the river.

Really? Will the secret base truly sink too?

“Understand? Anyway, I have to make my rounds. So stay here until I get back.”

Saying that, my father put his hand on my head.

“You’re also the big brother to your younger siblings. Don’t throw a fit and take care of your brothers, okay? I’m leaving now.”

He let go of my head and left the house. Mom isn't home either; she went to a gathering. Now's the only chance to go.

"Big... big brother..."

"It's okay, Saint. I promise I'll get your treasure back, no matter what."

I looked into Saint's teary eyes, trying to reassure him.

"No, it's okay... I'm fine now. Even without my treasure, I'll be okay."

What is he saying? It's a memento from our parents. How can he give up on it so easily?

"Alright, I'll go too. I'll keep an eye on the river from above the docks and shout really loud if the water comes. That way, you can relax, Saint."

Cain offered a safety plan in case things go wrong. Even though he's easygoing, he's more dependable than me. I can trust him.

"Yeah, okay..."

Saint seemed convinced.

"Alright, let's get that treasure! We're just going to the secret base. We'll be back before Mom and Dad come home."

"Okay. See you, Saint. Just wait at home."

With that, Cain and I started running towards the secret base. But the entrance we usually use to get to the docks was closed. Why? There's a crowd of adults near the eastern gate. What should we do?

“Ugh, Cain, this is bad. How do we get in?”

“I don’t know... Maybe if we can somehow get over the city wall... Should we leave from the southern gate and circle around?”

If we go to the southern gate and exit the city, we can make our way around and reach the secret base.

“That would mean passing by the eastern gate and being seen. And besides, they might not let us out from the southern gate either... I’ve got it!”

“Hmm? Did you come up with something?”

“Yeah, yeah. Remember that time when someone talked about what might be in the depths of the secret base? They said it was connected to the river in the city. Maybe we can reach it from there.”

“Oh, right!”

Someone in our group suggested going deeper into the secret base once. It was really dark, and they talked about what might be there, but it seemed too dangerous. We ended up going together and exploring the depths.

“Exactly! The passage inside the secret base leads to a small stream in the city. Maybe we can use that to get there.”

“Alright, great thinking!”

Cain, as expected.

At the small stream leading to the secret base, there were also three adults guarding it. Seriously, why is security so tight?

“Look, Cain. They’re leaving. Seems like they’re not constantly

watching, just checking periodically.”

“Got it. Let’s wait for the right moment and dash!”

We waited until the adults were far enough, then carefully made our way down to the stream and proceeded along the narrow path into the tunnel.

“Hey, don’t you hear something? Like a rushing sound?”

Cain said, glancing around.

“Huh? Maybe it’s your imagination?”

“Hmm, I’ll go check outside for a moment.”

Cain left the tunnel. The area outside the secret base didn’t seem flooded either.

“Hey, wait a second! Watch out!”

What’s he talking about?

Cain, who’s usually so laid-back, suddenly sounded panicked.

“Help! Hurry over here, bro! Climb up to the docks!”

What’s going on?

In the blink of an eye, the noise turned into a roar, like a raging storm.

“Water’s surging up from the river below! Quick!”



“Water from below?”

As I rushed to climb up to the docks, I saw the area that’s usually dry between the secret base and the docks was already flooded. Oh no, I can’t make it to the docks anymore. Looking down the river, I saw a massive wave approaching!

What is that? Why is the water flowing upstream from below?

“Cain! Hurry!”

Cain was watching from above the docks. Thank goodness he’s safe.

“Cain! Take this!”

I handed the treasure to Cain just as I was swept away by a powerful surge of water.

## Chapter 47 - The Fairy

“Oh, here it comes. It’s been a while since I’ve seen this backflow.”

We adventurers are currently mostly tasked with dealing with this backflow phenomenon. Originally, it’s the duty of the knight’s order, but apparently they’re not around today.

Even so, the preparations for dealing with the backflow were mostly finished by the previous day. While it was quite tough until yesterday, with all the ship pulling and such, from today onwards, for the next few days, all we have to do is patrol and we get a bonus for that.

“Please, please! Help my big brother!”

“What the...? Why is there a kid here causing a commotion? Hey, hey, hey! Big bro!”

What’s going on, it’s getting noisy. My fellow party members are making a fuss.

“What’s wrong? Don’t just leave your post on your own... Wait, hold on! Duncan’s kid and this second one, isn’t it?”

Why is Duncan’s son here of all places? Duncan shouldn’t have brought his kids along today. Aren’t the gates supposed to be sealed shut? Didn’t Duncan have three kids? Is it just this one?

“Please, my big brother was swept away by the river! Please help him!”

“Huh!? Are you saying that Duncan’s eldest son got carried away by the river?”

Oh no, this is bad. It was supposed to be an easy job, just looking at the river!

“Where is he?”

“Over there! Over there!”

“Over there...? Ah...”

“I found him! Big bro, it’s over there!”

One of my junior comrades points in a direction.

“Hey, you, you’re the second one, go call Duncan. He’s probably around the fourth dock.”

“Is big bro... Is he okay?”

“Uh... Well...”

Honestly, it’s probably impossible.

“Hey, big bro! Look! Look!”

Suddenly, my junior comrades start pointing and making a commotion, looking up at the sky. What’s going on?

“Hey, is that...? Isn’t that the fairy from the other day?”

That fairy that appeared at the guild not too long ago. Back then, I thought about trying to catch it and make some quick money, but it turned into a big mess.

“Fairy? The fairy! Fairy, please! Help my big brother! Please!”

“Are you serious? Are you saying that a fairy is going to help with

rescue?”

“Alright, alright, alright, kid! Don’t you— Wait, wait, wait! Duncan and his second son, come here!”

“Why do you...?”

“Whoa, big bro! That’s amazing! Wow!”

“Hey, hey, this is seriously incredible!”

The fairy jumps into the river and starts swimming with tremendous speed! Fairies can swim?

“Hey, she’s heading towards the kid!”

The kid being carried by the current is struggling, being tossed around and disappearing from view, but the fairy is definitely following after.

“Go! Over there!”

“Keep going! Keep going!”

Before I know it, a crowd has gathered around us, cheering.

But... Ah, he sank. The kid disappeared for quite some time. We don’t know if he’s still alive. Even if he is alive, his chances of living a normal life from now on are slim.

Ah, well, he’s got all his limbs. They’re not bent in any strange directions... Wait a minute, he’s waving his hand towards us!

No way. Did he really survive this? Even if he survived, that kind of happy ending, it’s too convenient, isn’t it?

Well, I guess this means I won't be able to sleep with my feet facing towards the fairy anymore!

## **Chapter 48 - The Kid's Adventure**

Phew, that was close! If I had been a little slower, this kid would've been dead!

I dried off the drenched child, healed his wounds, and made sure he's fully recovered. As long as he's not dead, I can heal him back to full health. No need to worry anymore.

When I was in the middle of changing dresses, I heard a loud noise from outside. When I went out to check, I saw water rushing back with incredible force. Looking up at the sky, both moons were nearly full.

Even on Earth with just one moon, the waxing and waning of the moon had quite an impact. In a world with two moons like this, the effects would be even more significant. The scent of the ocean was wafting from the river. Even though I can't see the sea from here, how did seawater manage to flow all the way here from the distant ocean?

Well, I'm glad I came to the secret base when I did. When I saw the kid being carried away, I thought my heart would stop. I took out the map again to check if there were any other people being swept away. Yup, looks like everyone else is safe.

This map really helped. When I lost sight of the kid after he disappeared, without the blue dot on the map, I might not have been able to find him again.

Also, practicing swimming in the bathtub really paid off. Seriously. If I hadn't practiced, I wouldn't have been able to catch up, let alone swim in these rough waters. And I might not have even thought about the idea of swimming or diving.

The bathtub is truly versatile!

Ah, this kid is the eldest of three siblings, right? No wonder he got swept away while he was playing in the secret base.

Kids these days are so reckless. I thought he'd be fine since he's a local, but clearly, that wasn't the case. This is definitely a lesson in parenting, isn't it?

The kid, who was waving at the adults on the shore, turned to me and smiled. Ugh... I want to punch that smile off his face. But for now, I smiled back. Oh well, I guess I'm happy for him.

And so, I carried the kid back to the shore. As soon as we got there, he started running around. He's full of energy, this kid, even though he was just swept away a while ago. He then embraced his younger brother. The younger brother was crying; I hope he wasn't too worried.

Next, I guess I should approach the father? I ran up to him, and we embraced. Then the kid, the eldest brother, pretended to hit the father.

Phew! That's right, right? You should scold him more, seriously! Kid, pay attention to your surroundings. There's a bunch of adults gathered around here. You caused them a lot of trouble.

Seeing this, the younger brother stepped in, offering something to the father. Then the father's expression turned serious.

Some people around them also became solemn.

What's that about? Oh, right, that's the thing the youngest of the three siblings showed me. He was holding onto it really precious, so it must have been something important. I see... Did the eldest brother come to the secret base to retrieve the youngest brother's precious item and got swept away in the process? I felt a tear well up. This is like one of those stories where you can't really get angry...

Seriously. How could he leave something so important in a place like this?

As I was lost in thought, I found myself surrounded. People were smiling and talking excitedly. Well, it's not every day you encounter a fairy, and besides, I just saved that kid earlier. Basically, I'm a hero! Hey, is it okay to worship me!?

Afterwards, I was led by everyone to a place that looked like a tavern, and we had a wild party with drinking and singing.

It seems like the adults were taking turns participating. Maybe they still had some work left, or they might have done something wrong. But it was so much fun!

Before I knew it, the surroundings had turned pitch black.

Oops, I was still wearing the dress.

## **Chapter 49 - Report to the King**

"So, you're saying the fairy saved that child?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And now they're making a commotion at the tavern?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Hmmm, I had instructed them to keep the fairies within the castle during the days of the reverse flow to avoid unnecessary chaos in the city. But it seems that decision might have backfired.

"I see. The reverse flow will continue for a few more days, but there's no need to keep the fairies in the castle anymore.

Let them do as they please."

"Understood."

The former Prime Minister had managed things quite well around

there, but maybe it's too much to expect the same level from the young successor. He seems to have inherited his father's talent, so with more experience, he might become a renowned Prime Minister like his father. If only times were different, he could have learned a lot from his father as a competent bureaucrat.

"Now, about the matter with the Merchant Guild..."

"Oh, yes, that one. It seems things went well with that. I've heard quite a bit from my wife, more than necessary..."

The Master of the Merchant Guild had requested permission to sell fairy-related merchandise. Those documents arrived a few days ago.

I'm known for being hands-off when it comes to these matters. The former Prime Minister handled this aspect quite skillfully, but he's no longer here... Dealing with this unprecedented issue of fairies falls squarely on my shoulders. Last time, I made the decision to "do nothing." Let's see if the same tactic works this time.

"If they want permission, they can get it directly from the fairy themselves. I won't do anything."

"Yes, they received permission directly from the fairy to sell items inspired by the fairies. Here are the detailed contract documents."

"Hmm, I'll take a look at these. But I didn't expect them to actually come and ask for permission."

The current Master of the Merchant Guild might not seem that impressive, but...

"How did they manage to successfully communicate with the fairy? I've heard that apart from them, no one else can really communicate with them properly."

"Well, there have been reports of children in the city befriending the fairies, and that seems to be the extent of it."



“I’ve heard that too, but is that really effective communication? I think they were just playing around. But the Master of the Merchant Guild managed to secure a contract.”

Honestly, it’s quite surprising. Maybe I should just leave everything related to the fairies to them. That thought keeps nagging at the back of my mind.

“I see. Well, let’s move on from that. Now, what about the situation with the church?”

Recently, when the mentioned fairy visited the church, there was a report that one of the cardinals went mad due to differences of opinion. This particular cardinal had apparently sided with the anti-fairy faction...

“The situation seems to be under control by Sir Gale.”

“I see. Gale is dealing with it, the most sensible one among our three cardinals. If he’s handling it, there shouldn’t be a problem.”

“Some are suggesting that fairies are objects of faith and should be handed over. It seems another young cardinal is arguing that fairies should be welcomed into the church. There’s a lack of consensus.”

“Ah, I see. It’s fine to let them argue like that. By the way, what about the news concerning Princess Tires?”

“What? Magic awakening? Is that true?”

I haven’t received any such report. Tires wasn’t supposed to be able to use magic. She couldn’t use magic until the age of 10. It’s unheard of for someone who couldn’t use magic to suddenly be able to use it without any special training.

“What’s going on?”

I'm puzzled.

"She's not yet at a practical level, but the Head of the Mage Corps suspects it might be due to the influence of the fairies.

Apparently, Princess Tires was exposed to the light of the fairies for about three days while returning from the neighboring country in a carriage. They think that might be the reason."

"Hmm. If that's true, then it might start affecting others as well."

If anyone exposed to the light of the fairies can suddenly use magic, we'll need measures to prevent malicious individuals from getting too close. We need to understand how often they need to be exposed and how much talent will bloom.

"We had fairy-attendant maids, right? What about Gale? How's he faring?"

"I don't have that information yet. I'll investigate."

"I see. Tires' talent isn't at a practical level yet, right?"

I want to confirm this. It's an important matter.

"That's what I've heard."

"I see. Is there a possibility that it will become practical?"

"According to the Head of the Mage Corps, it's unlikely without further effort. With continued effort, she might achieve practical use for everyday magic, but not combat-level proficiency."

"Hmm, then that's fine. If Tires wishes, let her be apprenticed to the Head of the Mage Corps."

Tires still has a narrow view. Her education seems to be going well in terms of content, but it might be a good opportunity to train her mental fortitude. Maybe we crammed too much knowledge into her during times of war or famine.

“Understood. In that case, I’ll take my leave.”

“Very well.”

Phew, finally done. My stomach is hurting.

There’s only a bit of paperwork left for today. Let’s finish it quickly and get some sleep.

As I was focusing on the paperwork, the fairy from earlier suddenly appeared. The stomachache seems to persist today...

“What is it? Do you need something? Ugh!”

The fairy shoved something into my mouth. What are they doing!

...Hmm? This is delicious, and I feel energized by it!! My stomach doesn’t hurt anymore. Hahaha, that little rascal. I think I understand a bit more now why my wife is so fascinated by them.

With the paperwork finished, I finally got a good night’s sleep after a long time.

## **Chapter 50 - All's Well, Not Guilty**

Ah, it’s night. The starry sky looks beautiful.

Why is it that nights after a commotion always make me feel a bit sentimental?

Looking up, there are two moons, not quite full yet. The reverse flow

of the river I witnessed today will probably intensify when it becomes a full moon. I think the reverse flow will continue for a few more days.

I gaze at the river. It's pitch dark, but I can see the ripples reflecting the starry sky. The water level is unusually high.

Even murky water reflects the starry sky...

I look at the sky again. The Milky Way. Maybe it's not the actual Milky Way galaxy, so I'm not sure if I can call it that.

What I do know is that this star is within a galaxy. The night sky full of stars is beautiful.

Oh, I wonder if I'll get scolded when I return? I thought it would be the other way around, with me scolding the kid, but what a boomerang effect. Now I might be the one scolded.

No, it's not decided yet. They didn't seem to want me to leave, but I still don't know if leaving is not allowed. Even if leaving is not allowed, today I helped a child. Maybe I won't get into trouble. The dress has been properly repaired as well. Actually, this might even be praiseworthy, right? Maybe even deserving of commendation?

No, I still don't know. The maid in the cage seemed pretty desperate at that time. A strangely earnest dance, a convincing performance. Looking back, her eyes might have widened in surprise. Her mouth might have been agape, like the statue of the guardian king. But I don't think she went all the way to the wrathful deity look, probably.

Wait a minute, isn't this bad? If they didn't want me to leave, there's a chance they had some plans for me afterward. And I messed up those plans.

Ugh, I better do something to make things right. What should I do? It might sound like I'm doing the same thing again, but maybe I should bring some fruit. I hope there's some human-sized fruit available...

But hold on, the fruit trees I planted are inside the castle. Even though I chose a spot with less foot traffic, it's still clearly visible from corridors and such. It's inside the castle, the king's domain. It's just normal fare at the royal table now. If I bring it now, they might say something like, "Oh, that's the one we always eat." Well, even if they say that, I wouldn't understand what they're saying.

Hmm, hmm. No, having something is still better than having nothing. It's a matter of sincerity. It might even go like, "It's the one we always eat, but if you brought it here on purpose, then let's forgive you." Something like that might happen.

I flew to the fruit trees.

Oh, there's only one fruit... The smaller ones are plentiful as usual, but there's only one human-sized fruit. When you have only one item as a gift, you usually give it to a superior or maybe the head of the organization...

In this case, it's the head. In other words, the king, Flash. If I give the fruit to Flash, there's a high probability he'll say,

"Hohoho. Everyone, this one is innocent! Case closed!!" If the king says it, there won't be any objections. It's his royal decree, just like his smooth forehead.

Furthermore, I'm sure this fruit is incredibly delicious. That adventurer was so engrossed in eating it. In fact, I might even receive compliments. In essence, "Hohoho. This is a splendid offering, let's reward them!" That kind of outcome might not be just a dream. My excitement is rising!

With a sense of triumph, I set out to find Flash... there he is! Reading something. It's already nighttime, and his work is done, so he must be indulging in his hobby of reading. It might be a bit intrusive to disturb him while he's working, but during his break, it should be fine. I pass through the wall and intrude into Flash's room.

Flash notices me and is about to say something, but I strike first! I

stuff the fruit into his mouth before he can say anything! How's that? Isn't it delicious? Say it's delicious! I plead not guilty!

...So, what do you think? Oh! He's starting to eat it with relish! Alright, not guilty! Now I can relax!

And so, I return to my room.

The birdcage maid is sitting on a chair in front of the birdcage, asleep... Maybe she was waiting for me all this time?

Wow, I feel so guilty! Is there anything that can lift this feeling of guilt from me?

Oh! Come to think of it, there were some glowing stones around the fruit trees, right? Maybe I can use those stones?

Alright, let's give it a try. I fly back to the fruit trees, collect the glowing stones... This is heavy! This stone!! Take this!

There, there.

Now, with this stone like this... like that! Hehehe, surely this will result in something like, "Oh, how lovely! Just as expected from a fairy!" Ah, I'm so relieved.

I return to my room and hang the necklace I just made on the birdcage maid. I also put a blanket over her. I drop the dress, which had been worn while being completely transparent, onto the table, and put on my own clothes that had been neatly folded by the birdcage.

What should I do with the dress? I don't know how to fold such a fluffy dress. If I just leave it there, it'll get wrinkled, won't it? Should I make a small mannequin? Alright, time to sleep!

Well, today was eventful, but looking back, everything turned out fine in the end!

All's well that ends well, right?

# Chapter 51 - Influence

In the morning, the water in the river recedes, and in the evening, it rises again. This cycle continues for five days... This phenomenon hadn't occurred in four years, but originally, it used to happen every year. It's quite noisy and disrupts my concentration.

"Princess, your focus is wavering."

The head of the mage division points it out.

"Phew... Magic is quite challenging."

"Indeed, that's the case. While there are many in the royal castle who can perform everyday magic, it's because the royal castle actively recruits talents. Generally, just being able to use magic is quite impressive."

"But if I could learn more powerful magic, that would be better. How do you use magic, Master of the Mage Division?"

In general, magic refers to the broader use of magical power, while magecraft often refers to the more powerful spells usable in combat. Although there isn't a strict distinction, it varies depending on people and situations.

"In my case, it's all about focus. Watch closely."

The head of the mage division gazes at the targets set up in the practice area and begins to increase their magical energy.

Ah, now I understand. It seems there's already a movement of magical energy before casting a spell.

"Heh... Hyaaah!!"



Snap!!

As the head of the mage division swings their staff down with a shout, a fiery projectile pierces through the target with a surprisingly light sound. But the result is gruesome. If a person were hit by that, it wouldn't end well.

"Princess, it might be best not to take it too literally... The way the division head uses magic is a bit unique."

One of the mage division members interjects. I understand, that what just happened wasn't normal. In fact, it's quite a well-known story that the head of the mage division screams every time they cast a spell.

"Practice manipulating magical energy and learn incantations. It might be mundane, but there's no shortcut to mastering magic or magecraft."

That's probably true. Even the head of the mage division used to chant properly when casting spells, it seems.

"Sigh, the path seems quite long."

"Well, Princess, are you interested in offensive magic? However, becoming skilled enough to use combat magic is extremely rare. It's not something you can achieve easily."

Implicitly, the head of the mage division is telling me it's beyond my reach. When I awakened to my magical talent, I was elated... No, I was being too ambitious. The fact that I can now use what was once completely beyond my grasp is fortunate in itself. I should think of it that way.

"Well, it's not unheard of for talent to suddenly manifest. For instance, I often hear stories of people activating magic instinctively when facing a life-threatening crisis."

Life-threatening crisis... Activate with determination... Could it

possibly manifest in situations like being attacked by bandits? But it's better if it doesn't come to that.

While pondering that, a maid I've been seeing around often lately approaches.

"Oh, Siluela. Did you come here as well?"

"Yes. I heard that you've developed magical talent, Your Highness. Congratulations."

"Thank you, but it seems I'm not suited for practical use."

"Excuse me for the intrusion, Siluela. I called you here today to confirm whether you might possess magical talent as well."

I see, Siluela has also been serving alongside the fairy-sama and has spent the most time with them these past few days. If my magic is influenced by the fairy-sama, the next person influenced might be Siluela... No, my personal maid has also been exposed to the same amount of fairy light during the carriage journey.

"Nyshe, please join us as well."

"Ah, right, I suppose that's true. Nyshe, let's check whether you have any magical talent. Both of you, try aiming at that target using magic."

The head of the mage division points at the target with their staff, but Siluela looks hesitant.

"Um, I don't know how to cast spells..."

"Ah, is that so? Then, Nyshe?"

The head of the mage division turns to my personal maid.

“I can use basic fire elemental magic... I know the incantations.”

“Good, let’s give it a try then. Here, use this practice wand.”

Nyshe receives the practice wand and begins to gather magical energy... and then she readies her wand and starts chanting.

“I beseech the flames I desire... Flame, pierce my enemies!”

Snap!!

A dry sound rings out. The projectile hasn’t reached the target. At best, it might be useful for close-quarters combat. No, with the chant, it might not be practical in close combat either. But still, I’m envious.

“Indeed, you managed to cast the spell. Could you already use it previously?”

“No, I couldn’t cast it before.”

“I see, so it’s likely the influence of the fairy-sama...”

The head of the mage division falls silent. One of the mage division members starts explaining magical energy manipulation to Siluela during this time. I was also asked if I could use offensive magic on the first day. The result was negative, and I’ve been focusing on practicing practical magic.

Thus, Siluela receives the practice wand from Nyshe, aims at the target, starts chanting...

Thud!!

“What the!? What’s going on!?”

“Oh?”

Not only did she hit the target, but a hole also appeared in the wall of the practice area!

Everyone present, including myself, is left in shock and astonishment. I’m speechless, utterly unable to find words.

“I seem to have made a bit of a blunder...”

Siluela, who has regained her composure, returns the wand to the head of the mage division and admits.

“Well, this is... Siluela seems to need to learn some control.”

“Um, probably, this might not be because of her. It’s likely due to this.”

Siluela points to the necklace she’s wearing.

“When I cast the spell earlier, this necklace grew warm.”

“I see... May I borrow this for a moment?”

\*Chink\*

“Hmm... This is quite interesting.”

The head of the mage division narrows their eyes.

“It seems that only Siluela is affected by it... Oh, could this be a spirit stone?”

“Oh, we’ve heard that spirit stones have started growing near the west wing, but is this one?”

The mage division members start getting excited. Though to be fair, there are only three of them present, including the head of the mage division. The rest of them are away at the eastern border.

“It seems that no one except Siluela should touch this... Oh, this might be a significant development to report.”

The head of the mage division holds their head in their hands, contemplating. A mage division member beside them is observing the necklace with keen interest.

There’s no shortcut, I guess. Frankly, I want it. I look up at the sky.

Envy invites misfortune. Moreover, I’ve been receiving warnings lately that I have a narrow perspective. I am me, and I must accomplish things with my own strength. Magic isn’t the only means to that end. My mission is to rebuild the country. There are things only I can do.

\*sigh\*... A life-threatening crisis, a determined snap...

The sun is dazzling. Summer is already here.

# Chapter 52 - Imperial Minister

“Fairy existence, huh...”

I examine the scrap of paper that the messenger bird brought with a report. Truly, even with the usual duties of a minister, things are quite busy.

Our faction supporting the second prince of the empire is currently pushing things quite forcefully. To ensure the second prince’s ascension to the throne, we want to make as much progress as possible before the first prince’s confinement is lifted. The bothersome top officials can only hinder us. The second prince is more than enough for the throne.

However, fairies actually exist? They say powerful monsters are born when they appear, so we adjusted the timing of the princess’s return to interfere, but in the end, no such monsters seemed to have appeared. I thought it might have been due to a delay in timing, so I had the bandits, loyal to the first prince’s faction, delay her by attacking, but it was in vain.

Perhaps instead of monsters, those fairies were born...?

Hmm, healing magic, enhancement magic, and the ability to carry a single child... Can they create small yet sharp swords or spears? Finger-sized? If that’s the case, it doesn’t matter.

The only concerns are healing magic, enhancement magic, and object levitation. Wait, there are holy crystals, spirit stones, and spirit elixirs being generated in the royal castle. Really?

To trigger a stampede, there’s a certain something needed, but if you want stable operation, having spirit stones is even better. With spirit stones, you can significantly expand the scale of the stampede. Is there any way to acquire them somehow...?

Then there's... a fairy-attached maid who awakened to powerful magic? While the magic's power is high, she's currently being trained to restrain her power, not to enhance it. However, the power to lightly pierce a stone wall, if she participates in the battle as a fixed turret, she could be dangerous. This one needs to be eliminated, nothing but a nuisance.

It's the fact that she's just a maid that's problematic. If she held a position during the campaign, we could adjust her battlefield location with our strategy. However, if the opponent is just a maid, it's uncertain whether she'll remain in the royal castle as a force or come out, no matter how much we try to manipulate her. It's best to eliminate unpredictable pieces early on... but if we too easily eliminate her, another similar one might emerge as the second or third. The timing of elimination is crucial.

The hoarding of potions is proceeding smoothly, and the kingdom is still unaware. However, due to the movement of ships, there have been some arrivals. We're trying to seize them or cause accidents to make them appear damaged.

Hmm, reflux. The backflow has reached the capital, filling the underground waterways. Hehehe... Rain wasn't anticipated, but thanks to it, the backflow has reached the capital. This means the poison we released into the underground waterways has likely spread throughout the city. Moreover, it might even spread downstream to other towns along the river. By late summer, their forces will surely decrease significantly.

I informed the first prince's faction to make their move during Garm. But... it seems like we might be able to use this to directly attack the royal castle before that.

"Hmph, I'll outwit them, both the kingdom and the first prince's faction."

With the irregularity of the fairies aside, everything is going well. I smirked to myself.

# Chapter 53 - Doll

After having breakfast, I was about to head out into the city again today. Ever since I helped that child by the river, I've been in a feverish state, with people waving at me as I walk down the street, giving me scraps at market stalls, and even bowing to me when I stop. Has there ever been anything as wonderful as this? No, there hasn't.

I'm so elated that I'm even thinking up catchy slogans like "Stand up and you're a peony, sit down and you're a rose."

Although I can't seem to come up with a good one.

The birdcage maid seems restless. When I approach the window, it performs a peculiar dance. When I move away, it stops. Approaching the window again... it dances! It's like a sensor-activated dancing maid doll. It keeps getting more and more lively if I stay near the window. The switch has been turned up!

Oh, I'm starting to feel a little teary-eyed. Maybe it's a bit too much. I'll return to the table where the birdcage is set up.

As I wait in the room, more and more people arrive. The seamstress from before, the dress merchant, the uncles led by Uncle Leader, the silver-haired girl, and the up-close lady, accompanied by their maids... it's like an all-star gathering. Is there going to be a dream match or something?

The dress merchant takes out a heavy-looking box and pushes it in front of me. What is it, what is it? This box is bigger than me... it's kind of like a personal coffin, and that's scary. Everyone around me has expectant looks in their eyes. Huh?

The box remains upright, and the dress merchant opens the lid. Scary!

Inside the box is a doll that looks just like me. Scary! It feels like it's looking at me! Its expressionless face is scary!



The seamstresses prepare a stand for the doll, and the dress merchant places the doll on it. The fairy doll stands on the table. Oh, they even prepared wings! The wings are attached separately, I see.

The room falls silent. What kind of reaction is expected here? What should I do?

I observe the people around me. This is definitely a look that expects some kind of reaction from a pet owner when they give a new toy to their pet. Come on, Marumaru-chan! “I got you a new toy, you look so cool,” in a high-pitched voice.

Woof! Woof woof! Ah, I see! Complete and utter joy! A full-faced smile! The atmosphere lightens up! Correct! The best reaction! I’m relieved.

Well, well, well, it’s still scary, though. Confronting a life-sized doll that looks exactly like me and is extremely expressionless is not something you experience every day. I feel like I’m being watched all the time. Scary.

I move a little to the side to avoid the doll’s gaze. Oh, the gaze follows me! Even if I move, it keeps looking at me! So scary!

I don’t sense any magic. It seems like this doll isn’t alive or anything like that. I peer into the doll’s eyes. Ah, its pupils are convex-shaped. That’s why it looks like it’s looking at you no matter where you stand. Oh, I think I’ve seen something like this before. I think I saw it with an optical illusion dragon in a past life.

Oh, this is a ball joint. Does that mean its arms can move? Let me try moving it a bit. Oh, it moved. I wonder how far it can move? Oh, it moves quite a bit. Huh?

Although it has the same green hair as me, in my past life, old-style dolls used actual human hair. So, could this green hair be from someone I don’t know...? I haven’t seen anyone else with green hair since I came to this world, but maybe there are people with green hair?

"I, Doll," is wearing a dress. It's the fluffy type of dress that it was first dressed in. But it's not the dress I was wearing. It seems like they specifically got a new one for this doll. I inspect the dress closely, and the inside doesn't seem to be made very well. I see, they've cut corners where you can't see, probably because it's not meant for practical use.

As I'm examining the dress, Up-close Lady's expression changes somehow. Is it... worry? Disappointment? No, what could it be? Then, at Up-close Lady's direction, the birdcage maid moves. It opens the closet. Oh, this is the first time I've seen this closet open. What's inside... oh my!

The closet is divided into about ten sections, and each one is filled with dresses my size from top to bottom! When did this happen!? Oh, I recognize a few of them. The ones at the top have hats and accessories. They even prepared all of those...

How many dresses are they planning for me to wear?

I'm taken aback, and Up-close Lady returns to her smiling self. What? What was that all about? Well... whatever.

Everyone is smiling. That's what matters. There's only one person in the room who seems to have some kind of ill intent.

Yes, in the back.

There's someone in the castle who also gives off that sense of ill intent. When I was being pursued, I felt that sense of ill intent from quite a few people, but it's decreased significantly over the past few days. However, it still lingers.

For example, there's a new maid who joined recently and is currently behind me. Sanboujutsusu? Sanboujutsusutsu?...

swirls around in the noble world. She's a newcomer, but she acts like she's a full-fledged employee, giving off a regular employee aura even more than the assistant maid who takes care of me. She was probably hired through connections.

Typical nobility, so dirty.

There are also three young magicians. There must be various situations in the castle. Maybe they're aiming to climb the ranks for success. I don't know the circumstances, so I'm not going to do anything special.

I continue to gaze at the doll, and Uncle Leader says something to me again. Again? Is he expecting a reaction from me?

Let's see... right, that's it. I'm sure with this person, he'd be pleased if I nodded. So, I nodded. See, he's happy now! So easy. I've become wiser. I'm close to winning the Nobel Prize in chemistry. It's now an established theory that when fairies nod, middle-aged men are delighted.

Up-close Lady pets me and the doll, while Silver-Haired Girl and the Uncles compare me and the doll, and everyone seems satisfied. Then they all leave the room.

Hey, wait a minute! Are you leaving the doll behind!? Take it with you, it's scary!

I and the doll, along with the birdcage maid, are left behind. The birdcage maid moves the doll and its stand to a table against the wall. I see, so the doll will watch over me from there.

I wonder

if I'll get in trouble for leaving it behind...

## Chapter 54 - A Farce

For the past few days, I, as a department apprentice, have been serving in the royal castle, and I have managed to fit in well as a lady-in-waiting to Lady Tires.

My previous attendant had awakened to talent in offensive magic and is currently serving as both an apprentice magician and a lady-in-waiting in the Magician's Tower. To have a talent for magic is one thing, but a talent for sorcery, that is truly enviable.

My most critical task as a hastily appointed servant in the castle is not the care of Lady Tires, however. It is to open a secret door from the inside when the empire attacks the royal castle.

It seems the imperial soldiers have already secured a route to the underground of the royal castle through the underground waterways, and all that remains is to open the hidden door that leads there to gain access to the royal castle at any time.

And the final key to that door is me.

However, since the location of the hidden door is still unknown, I would like to complete the investigation of the underground of the royal castle as soon as possible. Therefore, I should not be participating in such a ridiculous farce...

In front of me, there is a scene where adults, who have been the cause of turmoil in the country, are playing with dolls, one resembling a fairy and another doll that looks exactly like that fairy. Honestly, what are they joking about? I cannot allow this royal family to carry the future of this country in such a manner.

"Now then, what kind of reaction will we get?"

The queen is comparing the fairy and the doll that looks exactly like the fairy with great excitement.

The mentioned fairy looks at the doll in surprise, then looks around, and once again gazes at the doll. Then, she directs a beaming smile at us. How... adorable.

The fairy seems quite interested in the doll that looks just like her. She observes it from various angles, from left to right, and even peers into its face.

“Well, well, is she envious of that dress? Or does she think her dress has been stolen? That’s not your dress. Your dress is still there. Silera, please open the closet.”

“Understood.”

The fairy’s attendant opens the closet. I am amazed. They prepared so many dresses for a fairy? Truly, this royal family...

it’s beyond belief. Even though the power of the royal family should be used for the country, they are wasting it on such things...

“Fairy, we are thinking of mass-producing and selling this doll to the nobility. Of course, we will compensate you generously.”

The fairy nods. Seriously?

“Oh, oh, do you grant permission? This is wonderful!”

Wasn’t the pre-information that communication would be difficult, and they couldn’t understand her? Clearly, they are having a conversation now. You can’t rely on the empire’s information...

“Then, we must be going.”

Finally, it seems this farce is coming to an end.

“But what shall we do? This doll was intended to be displayed in the

queen's room..."

"Yes, and the fairy seems to be very fond of it. We cannot take this doll with us. I will be pleased with the next one that is completed."

"Understood. Then, that's how it will be."

Phew, after this, Lady Tires is planning to go to the Magician's Tower. During that time, I will go to investigate the underground.

The future of this country should be borne by our ducal family.

# Chapter 55 - Birds

After the doll commotion, I went out into the city as usual.

The river had returned to its normal state, with a stable water level and large boats traversing it. Perhaps because of this, the city seemed to be bustling even more. I made my way to the central square, stopping at various stalls along the way, as was my routine.

As I reached the square, I noticed a gathering of people. What's going on? I could hear music too. Ah, it's a bard, most likely. They were playing some instrument resembling a guitar while singing something. Although, it might be a solo singer-songwriter.

No, it's definitely a bard. Their delivery felt more like reciting lines than singing, with the pitch and intensity of their voice.

As I approached the square, I noticed that people were cheering enthusiastically, with a lively atmosphere. Hmm, they seem to be receiving a more fervent welcome than usual. The bard's music and storytelling were becoming more impassioned. Well, I couldn't understand what they were saying, but it seemed engaging.

Feeling like we were reaching a climax or chorus, I waved a sparkling effect into the air. The crowd got even more excited! Everyone had big smiles; I had done a good deed!

Once the song ended, the bard approached me, and I waved back in acknowledgment. That should be it, and I thought about moving on. But the people around were still bustling, and the bard seemed to be saying a lot more now. I tilted my head in confusion, and it seemed to make them more determined.

Ah, this reaction was one I recognized. It's the "senior leader" mode. In other words, the theory that if a fairy nods in agreement, it works not only for middle-aged men but also for young men was a groundbreaking discovery. I nodded, and the bard was delighted! There you go; theories are reliable!

Then, the bard took out some paper and started writing something down... about three pages worth. The speed at which they wrote was impressive. They finished and handed me the paper. Wait, what am I supposed to do with this?

I unfolded the paper just to check. It was indeed written words. But, as usual, I couldn't read them. Well, if I rejected it or threw it away here, it would probably leave a bad impression, right? I should take it. I pretended to roll up the paper like a scroll, and the bard seemed delighted again.

The bard continued their performance, and as I enjoyed my time in the square, I realized it was already late afternoon. It was time to head back; the birdcage maid would be waiting in my room until I returned.

On my way back towards the royal castle, I felt something akin to malevolence in the air.

Hmm, this was the first time I'd sensed something like malevolence in the sky! Could it be a flying monster? I pulled out my map to check



## Chapter 56 - The Duke

“Well, Zanten, we have a suitable request, and it’s a personal one.”

“I was summoned to Guildmaster’s room out of the blue, so what kind of request is it?”

To be honest, I’m not really in the mood to take on more work right now. It seems there’s been an issue with children using the underground waterways to get to the river during the backflow, and now they’re in the process of sealing off some sections of the underground waterways. Who on earth are these troublemakers causing problems for the adults?

They say the sealing process will be completed soon, so we need to double-check which routes are blocked and which are still open. Seriously, what a hassle.

“Apparently, we’ve received a request to collect sacred crystals and spirit stones. It seems someone sniffed out their availability from somewhere. Thanks to that, we managed to secure permission for passage through the noble district. It’s not just entry permission; it’s passage permission, you know?”

“Well, that’s quite generous.”

If I recall correctly, entry permits can only be used once, whereas passage permits grant free access within a specified timeframe. That’s quite convenient.

“Oh, don’t sound so surprised. The requester is none other than Duke Bastille himself. To get a direct request from the Duke, you must be moving up in the world! Gahaha!”

“Wow, that is surprising!”

Well, there's no such thing as a free lunch, is there? I had a sneaking suspicion, but my enthusiasm took a nosedive. Duke Bastille, the very influential noble who recently formed connections with the Empire behind the scenes. It makes sense that I'd be chosen. He's known to be quite overbearing, and honestly, I don't really want to meet him...

"But, well, I initially wanted to assess the danger posed by the fairies, but now it seems unnecessary. When you look closely, there's some trouble, but if you take a step back, it's not all bad. It doesn't seem like such a dangerous thing, and it's quite popular in the city."

"I see. So, what will you do? Will you decline this request?"

"No, if we can start getting spirit stones delivered here, it'll be profitable. I want you to take on the request."

"Understood."

"Alright, don't let it go to your head. I'll be heading to the Duke's place now to receive the details of the request."

"Right, starting now? Well, okay."

I guess I'll have to put off going to the underground passages for now. Going to the underground passages after this would just make me smell bad. Besides, it seems that the underground passages will be sealed off soon. Well, I'll listen to what they have to say and then hurry back. By the way, what are sacred crystals used for, and what about spirit stones?

"...You've arrived. Are you the adventurer who accepted the request?"

"Yes, well..."

When I arrived at the Duke's mansion, I was immediately brought before the Duke himself. He's quite impatient, it seems.

“Hmph. You all, withdraw.”

“But, my lord...”

“I won’t say it twice.”

“Very well...”

The butler who brought me here and the maids in attendance all left the room. Huh? So, does that mean everyone in the mansion is aware of the conspiracy?

“Hmph, to think that I have to deal with such a ragged adventurer... Well, I suppose I can endure it for a while.”

Oh, I see, I must look quite shabby. I did clean up a bit before meeting the noble, though. Well, even if he finds it unpleasant, it won’t hurt me.

“Ever since fairies appeared in the capital, the areas around the capital and the western regions have been experiencing bountiful harvests, right?”

“...? What are you talking about? I have heard rumors of such things, though.”

“At this rate, only the areas around the capital and the west will prosper, creating a wider wealth gap. Is that not unfair?”

“...It might be.”

“Hmph. The Second Knight Order, which was on a disaster relief mission in the port town, will be passing through our territory on their way back. They’ll be detained here for reasons related to disaster recovery.”

“That’s certainly a generous offer.”

“But the benefits of the fairy’s blessings are limited to the capital and the west. The other regions are still struggling with poor harvests. If this continues, we’ll have to obtain food from the capital. If the fairies continue to exist next year, the wealth gap will widen even further. We must resolve this before winter.”

“I see.”

Doesn’t this Duke know that the Empire is behind the drought? He’s being manipulated.

“These fairies must be touring the capital, right? That’s where I come in; I’ve called bards to the capital.”

“I see.”

Huh? I can’t quite grasp the point of this. The nobleman’s stories are always so long.

“I had the bards talk about the charms of my territory to the fairies and invite them to visit. If we treat them better than the royal family, there’s a chance they might settle in our lands. Even if they don’t, just having the fairies visit temporarily would ensure a bountiful harvest that year.”

Well, it’s true that having the fairies visit would lead to a bountiful harvest, but is it that easy to invite them?

“That bard, he’s an obedient fool. He’s probably sent them a warm invitation by now! Kukukuku...”

“Oh, that’s quite skillful.”

What’s this? Why is he telling me all this?

“Now, what about the details of the request? Is it related to the Empire?”

“Oh, yes. It is. It seems they require spirit stones to amplify the effects of the Standpiids for greater devastation. They received orders from the Empire for acquiring spirit stones. Additionally, they need sacred crystals and fairy scale powder from you. It seems they’d be pleased with spirit stones as well. Hmph, that greedy old man.”

“Fairy scale powder... I understand.”

Fairy scale powder, huh? It would be difficult to collect directly. Speaking of which, there was some commotion at the Apothecary Guild about being able to obtain it not too long ago. I’ll have to borrow some from there.

“By the way, what are sacred crystals and fairy scale powder used for?”

“Sacred crystals are useful for things like anti-undead weaponry and purification rituals. The church and some specialized dungeon adventurers would covet them, but they’re not in high demand among the general populace. As for fairy scale powder, I have no idea what it’s used for. Maybe mages have some use for it?”

“Hmph, maybe he wants to remove a curse. He’s probably suffering right now. Kukukuku...”

Huh? Speaking of curses, is this about the curse being lifted from the queen? Is the sorcerer currently under a curse? The Empire hasn’t informed me of any of this, which means they don’t want this information to spread. Can I really talk about it?

Huh? This Duke might be useful if handled properly. He’s been babbling on about unrelated topics, and he seems like someone who craves validation.

I might be just a small fry, and I don't get informed about everything by the Empire either. But if I stroke his ego a bit, I might be able to extract some valuable information from him.

Well, that means I'll be played by the Empire. He's quite a gullible guy. Is he even capable?

"Very well. It seems like a matter that doesn't concern me. That should be all then."

"Wait, take this with you."

"What's this?"

"It's a magical tool that can summon the sorcerer from the other side. It can only be used once, so be careful. Once you obtain the requested items, hand them all over to that sorcerer. That's the instruction."

"I understand..."

Come on, he should have mentioned something this important earlier and not in passing.

"And one more thing, the maidservant with magical abilities who has become associated with you, erase her too. Don't do it too quickly. She might give birth again."

"Yes, yes, I understand."

Honestly, why didn't he mention this before the lengthy conversation? He talks so much about important instructions as if they're an afterthought.

And this maidservant with powerful magic, she emits a curse, right? He's asking me to erase her like it's no big deal. I can't refuse, but... sigh.

I left the Duke's mansion and looked back.

I can't believe that someone like him is aiming for the king of this country? It's just another joke. I won't say anything bad; they should just let themselves be ruled by the Empire quietly.

Well, I'll just use them to my advantage.

# Chapter 57 - Underpass investigation

Huh? That's strange, really strange.

The last time I was in the underground tunnels, they weren't this clean. What's going on? It's so sparkling clean now. It's almost like a post-year-end cleaning. Before, the air was filled with a putrid stench that could make you slip if you weren't careful on the slimy floors and walls.

I have a bad feeling about this. Honestly, I had a hunch that the fairies had some kind of healing power, but I really don't want to confirm it. I guess checking the routes can wait for now. Let's head towards the central area first.

Look at this! Look at this, I can't believe it! Oh no, it's been detoxified. Our own antidotes we had are useless now. Oh, this is bad. Really bad.

In the last communication, the plan was to use the Standpieds and simultaneously attack the Royal Castle from the underground tunnels. The judgment was based on the assumption that the capital would be weakened due to the poison.

But that assumption has already been overturned. This means that if we continue with the plan, it's likely to fail at some point. I don't like this at all.

I need to confirm the routes in the underground tunnels and prioritize informing the usable ones as soon as possible. The higher-ups probably don't even think that the poison plan has already been thwarted. I need to hurry.

By the time I finished checking most of the underground tunnel routes, it was already late afternoon. I rushed back to our base to send a messenger bird.

There's no doubt about it; we have to change the plan for sure.



# Chapter 58 - Report Contents

Hmm, a messenger bird from the kingdom. It's too early for the scheduled report, so something must have happened.

I take out the paper from the tube attached to the out-of-season messenger bird. This time, the paper seems unusually large. Let's see...

“Oh, my beloved fairy... What is this!? Are they joking!?”

No, calm down. They wouldn't use a messenger bird just to send a frivolous scrap of paper... Could this be a code?

I quickly skim through the seemingly frivolous message. In summary, it praises the fairies, mentions how great the Bastille territory in the northern part of the kingdom is, and invites someone to visit. Huh?

This doesn't correspond to the codes we primarily use within the Empire. So, is it not a code? Maybe they're just concealing what they want to say within the text?

If there's an underlying message... It could mean that the fairies are in danger, something is happening in the Bastille territory to the north of the kingdom, and they urgently need investigation?

Bastille territory is where that idiotic Duke rules, right? What on earth could be happening there? I'd like to contact the spies in the capital, but they've sent this message in such a way that it seems unlikely they've discovered our movements.

Still, it might be better not to make any more contact from now on.

However, even if we decide to investigate the Bastille territory, we're lacking resources. Should I assign the task to the First Prince's faction? No, if something crucial is happening that benefits the Second Prince's faction, the First Prince's faction could exploit it.

We may not have enough resources, but we have no choice but to conduct the investigation ourselves. Damn, losing contact with the capital has made things difficult for us in the future.

Well, we did release poison in the capital. It's unlikely anything significant will happen...

## Chapter 59 - It's Noticed

After finishing breakfast, I wait in my room for a while.

I've recently learned to gauge my plans for the day by waiting after breakfast. If there's nothing scheduled, I head out into the city. If there's something happening, I stay put until the event is over.

Today, the group led by Uncle Leader has arrived, accompanied by two new people. These newcomers aren't the uncles who were here before. There's a middle-aged man and two women among them. Uncle Leader is still in charge, but the middle-aged man seems important too, perhaps a vice leader?

And as usual, Close-Up Guy is here too. Is he bored? He strokes me with his finger, then goes on to stroke the little wall-me and engages in a conversation with Cage Maid, looking rather satisfied.

Uncle Vice Leader puts what looks like a heavy, square box-like bag on the table and hands it over to me. Wait, could this be another doll? He opens the box...

Whoa, gold coins? Wow! I express my delight, and Uncle Vice Leader promptly closes the box. Huh, why close it? Did he just come to show off, saying, "Look at all this money I have!" or something? What's that about?

Watching, Uncle Vice Leader hands the box full of gold coins to Cage Maid, who takes it without any change in her expression, as if it's perfectly normal. It seems like having that much gold coins in a box is nothing unusual at the castle.

But why did he suddenly give me money? Thinking that, the two women then take out a paper box with a fairy emblem on it. Hmm, I recognize this. It's the same box with cookies that I often see at the souvenir shop in the city! I occasionally go there to get some cookie crumbs, so in a way, I'm a regular customer. I don't pay a single coin though, just a pesky customer...

Cage Maid, having left the gold-filled box somewhere, returns with a tea set for me and a tea set for humans. Then, tea is served to me and Close-Up Guy. This means it's okay to have cookies too, right? Great, I'll help myself!

While munching on cookies, a music box adorned with fairies comes next. It's not like the wooden box from last time; this one has intricate three-dimensional fairies attached. There are transparent color panels that mimic wings along the golden frame, making it look pretty expensive. I need to be careful not to accidentally knock it off the table or something; they'd probably get mad. Gotta watch out...

As we enjoy the elegant tune of the music box, Uncle Leader continues talking non-stop, as usual...

Oh, could it be? All these fairy-themed goods, and the large sum of money... Are they making a profit off of me, their model? Perhaps my owner is receiving royalties from the royal family? Money goes where money is, after all. Even though I'm penniless... It's a cruel world. Would they at least give me some of that money?

Well, it's fine, but I'm a bit bothered that they're using me as a model without asking for my permission... Wait a minute, did they really do it without my consent? I seem to recall that I nodded in agreement quite frequently around Uncle Leader. Could it be that I was coerced into various contracts...?

Fooled again! Yes, I've been fooled!

Oh no, oh no! What did I agree to? I nodded my head once or twice, right? I fly around Uncle Leader in a fit of anger, making my displeasure known! Uncle Leader and Uncle Vice Leader look quite disappointed. The Cookie Sisters in the back seem flustered too.

Oh, I almost lost control there. If I had continued to mindlessly nod as I did before, that portrait of me could have been circulated to the world. Whew... Wait? I have a bad feeling about this... When the doll version of me was presented to me, didn't I also...?

Ahh! My life-sized doll could be out there in the world!!

Darn you, Uncle Leader!

# Chapter 60 - Refusal

“Fairy-sama, you look as adorable as ever. And this doll here is truly well-made.”

The queen gently strokes Fairy-sama, then proceeds to stroke the Fairy-sama doll. Today, we’ve come to discuss important matters and to deliver the agreed-upon payment.

“Just the other day, you returned from outside and went straight to your doll here.”

“That’s wonderful! Not only us but also the skilled doll artisans who crafted this should be delighted.”

The reply from the fairy’s attendant makes me vividly imagine the lovely scene with Fairy-sama and her doll.

“Ah, this here is Fairy-sama. It’s a pleasure to finally meet you.”

It seems our guild’s Sub-Master, who tagged along quite insistently this time, is also moved. However, we can’t afford to linger. First, we must settle the payment and move on to the main topic. I signal the Sub-Master to get going.

“Now, then... Here’s the agreed-upon payment.”

Fairy-sama checks the case filled with gold coins, then looks at the Sub-Master and me. She takes another look at the case... and oops, the Sub-Master closes it while Fairy-sama was still inspecting it.

“Now, this.”

“Indeed, we received it, thank you.”

With the payment settled, we can move on. But first, let's lighten the mood a bit. I signal to the secretary I brought today, and she starts preparing cookies.

In the meantime, I prepare the newly crafted music box. Unlike the hastily put together one we provided last time, this one was meticulously crafted by our dedicated artisan over time. This should surely satisfy Fairy-sama!

"My, my, this is quite intricately made."

While Queen-sama watches with keen interest, Fairy-sama examines the music box while enjoying her cookies. She checks the face, inspects the wings, and seems thoroughly interested. I'm relieved that she appears satisfied. Now, let's get to the main point.

"Well then... Fairy-sama, we have a matter to discuss today..."

While observing the music box, Fairy-sama glances over at us. I take this as a cue to continue.

"It has come to our attention that the royal palace is experiencing the growth of spirit stones, holy crystals, and even spirit medicines... and we were wondering if you would consider providing these items to us at regular intervals?"

Fairy-sama suddenly flies around the room in an angry manner! Oh no, it seems I've angered her!

"Hyaa!" "Kyaa!"

It seems the secretary I brought along has been caught up in this as well.

The reason for making such a proposal goes back a few days. A certain adventurer, at the behest of Duke Bastille, approached us to inquire if we could obtain spirit stones and holy crystals. Duke Bastille is known to have recently arranged for his second daughter to serve as an

attendant to Princess Thelis. This source of information likely came from there.

While it's essentially a double order, word has it that I'm the most suitable for negotiating with the fairy. Thus, the adventurer brought the matter to me.

After discussions with the Adventurer's Guild, we negotiated and concluded that if Fairy-sama were to agree, we would handle the matter. We first sought permission from His Majesty the King, but due to concerns about upsetting the balance of power between neighboring states and nobles, our request was denied. However, Duke Bastille stands behind us.

Unable to back down easily, I managed to secure a response: if Fairy-sama agrees, it's acceptable.

But her current display of anger, this is a failure! So far, Fairy-sama has been generally agreeable to our proposals, and I never expected such a strong rejection. I got carried away.

"I apologize, Fairy-sama! Well, then... Even just the Adventurer's Guild alone... Oh, ah!"

Fairy-sama continues to flutter around me.

"No, no! Please, forgive us!"

"Hehe, that's what I said. Fairy-sama is a wise one. You surely can't agree to recklessly distribute powerful items like spirit stones."

Queen-sama speaks triumphantly. Indeed, she had shared a similar opinion with us beforehand...

Fairy-sama eventually calms down and returns to her seat at the table. We need to somehow make amends. I present one last item, an image of Fairy-sama. This should do it!



“Fairy-sama, could you at least... at least grant us two spirit stones and one holy crystal...?”

These are the minimum requirements that the Adventurer’s Guild had heard from Duke Bastille’s request. While Fairy-sama examines the picture of herself, we negotiate for the bare minimum. If this doesn’t work, we’ll have to give up. The response is...

# Chapter 61 - From Small Things

“Tires, this is for you.”

“What is it, Mother?”

It’s unusual for Mother to visit the training grounds. As the queen, she has many official duties to attend to. Lately, she has been stretching herself thin to make time to visit the fairy. Even without that, Mother had been bedridden until recently, and her official duties must have accumulated during that time.

Furthermore, she’s here alone today, without any maids or attendants. I noticed her attendants waiting at a distance. What could she possibly have come to tell me that requires such secrecy?

“Is this about magic practice again? You really shouldn’t be doing that.”

“...Did I have any other plans for today?”

There were no specific plans for today. I had declined an invitation to visit the fairy’s room and was practicing my magic.

“Master of the Guild let slip something interesting. It seems the Duke is behind the scenes, aiming to obtain spirit stones and holy crystals.”

“Huh? I’m not sure I understand...”

Spirit stones and holy crystals? I recall hearing that the fairy had created a sanctuary in the western wing, and some very rare materials were emerging there. Is that what she’s talking about?

“By the way, where is your attendant?”

...? This conversation seems to have taken a strange turn. What does Mother want to convey to me?

“During your magic practice, I’ve granted her a break. However, you must keep an eye on that daughter of mine. She frequently sneaks off to the underground while you’re not around.”

“Why would she do that?”

I wonder why she would go to the underground when there’s nothing there... unless there’s a treasure vault.

“If we can figure that out, it won’t be a problem. It’s unnatural for a duke’s daughter to become a lady-in-waiting for no apparent reason. It happened so smoothly, and there’s something fishy about it.”

Indeed, that’s true. I remember feeling something was off as well. When a high-ranking noble’s daughter becomes a lady-in-waiting, it’s usually for reasons like escaping political conflicts, preparing for marriage to foreign royalty, or gaining higher education to enhance their decorum. Nonetheless, it’s strange that the royal family isn’t aware of the reason behind it.

“Understood.”

“You need to ensure you don’t let her out of your sight. But don’t be too obvious about it. Come up with a natural reason for why you can’t practice magic together anymore. And make sure she doesn’t find an opportunity to be away from you.”

“I’ll do my best.”

“It seems that Duke is still nursing a grudge from three generations ago. Who knows what he’s up to this time.”

It might be a power struggle or something else entirely. I’ve never been involved in such dealings before, so I doubt I can naturally change my behavior by giving a plausible reason. Mother casually

asks me to do something quite difficult.

Well, since I'm not good at this sort of negotiation and I've been treated unfairly as an ambassador in the neighboring country, it's time to set aside my weakness. Now that I've decided to save the country, I can't afford to say I'm not good at something.

First, I'll start with small things, like making sure my attendant stays with me and gradually work from there...

## Chapter 62 - News

“Wow! Is that true?”

“Hey, you! Don’t act like that, revealing information to everyone around!”

Oh no, I’m getting scolded again. I thought I was finally getting used to the routine work of being a receptionist at the Adventurer’s Guild. When I first became a receptionist, the rain had stopped, and there were fewer requests. But recently, the rain started again, and the number of requests returned to the usual level from a few years ago. Seniors say this is normal, but for me, it’s a lot of work.

“I’m sorry; I’m still a rookie. I’ll handle this.”

My senior comes to my rescue. She has her kind moments too.

“Really? Is it true!?”

Wait! Even the senior said it! But I can’t voice that. Seniors can be scary.

“You, contact the Guildmaster immediately! Prepare the meeting room!”

“Yes, of course.”

Oh, it’s going as I expected! The Guildmaster can be scary too, but I can’t afford to complain right now.

“Guildmaster! Guildmaster!”

I rush to the Guildmaster’s room and knock on the door.

“Shut up!”

“Eek!”

Yep, still scary! The Guildmaster comes out and starts yelling right away.

“What do you want?”

“St-Stampede! There are signs of a stampede on the outskirts!”

I quickly convey the information I just heard to the Guildmaster. And the Guildmaster’s face immediately turns serious.

Yikes.

“What did you say? Is it true?”

Ugh, don’t get so close with that oily face! Don’t spit on me!

“I-I’m not sure! Senior told me to prepare the meeting room. Aren’t we going to discuss it there?”

“Fine. Gather all the mid-ranking or higher adventurers in the Guild right now!”

“Yes, okay!”

Wait, what about preparing the meeting room? Isn’t the Guildmaster going to take care of that? For now, I need to find the adventurers waiting in the lobby.

“Everyone, stop! Please wait! Um...”

Well, it’s not like there are a lot of people in the Guild right now. It’s

common for the mid-ranking adventurers to be out during the afternoon. I only see three of them: Nos, Zanten, and Duster. There are no higher-ranking adventurers around.

“Nos, Zanten, Duster! Please come to the meeting room!”

Nos is the adventurer who brought the information about the stampede. I hadn't seen him around recently, but it seems he went to the outskirts. He's been a valuable source, bringing information from remote areas. Zanten is the adventurer who's often used by the Guildmaster and spends a lot of time in the Guild. Duster is, well, always here. Just as always, he seems to be drinking. I hope he's not too drunk for the meeting.

“Yes, what's up, Missy?”

“Zanten, it's not ‘Missy’! But never mind, follow me to the meeting room!”

I guide the three of them to the meeting room, but I'm worried about the preparations.

“Hey, you, the meeting room isn't ready yet.”

“Oh, really? But the Guildmaster said...”

“Quiet. I'll take care of it. You go prepare some tea.”

Phew, that was close. I know better than to argue. Besides, I'm not involved in the meeting anyway.

By the way, the Adventurer's Guild Fairy Brawl incident is my go-to favorite topic for entertaining conversations. It's the one story that never fails to amuse, from high-ranking officials to low-ranking adventurers. It provides a hilarious story that covers everyone's perspectives. The climax is the brawl, and the punchline is me fixing the request board.

And, I need to serve tea quickly.

The fairy doesn't need tea, right?



# Chapter 63

While flying over the city and contemplating where to go today, I spotted a suspicious group of people in an alley.

One of them was a Nayo adventurer who often tails me whenever I venture into the city. The other four were unfamiliar faces, but I sensed something malevolent from all five of them.

People in this world seem to be professionals at finding me, even though I'm just a small fairy. So, to avoid being spotted, I decided to observe them from a considerable height, using buildings as cover.

After a while, the Nayo adventurer separated from the group and entered the Adventurer's Guild. Shortly after, another one followed suit. The remaining three scattered throughout the city.

Hmm, this is suspicious. It's so suspicious that it makes you wonder what isn't suspicious. This feels like an incident, the scent of an incident. I should go to the Adventurer's Guild and find out more.

Inside the Adventurer's Guild, I noticed that the receptionist was escorting two of the adventurers who had gathered in the alley earlier, along with another adventurer, upstairs. One of them was the adventurer who had given me some meat before, and we had become acquaintances since he often frequented the Guild's dining area for drinks.

Upon reaching the second floor, I saw the receptionists arguing by the door. I hadn't noticed there was a door there before. The other three adventurers from earlier seemed to be in a room behind that door. Okay, I'll join in.

I created a small chair for myself next to the table in the meeting room. I did it to ensure I wouldn't be thrown out together with the chair if they tried to get rid of me. It worked. They couldn't kick me out.

I wonder what this room is for? A meeting room, perhaps? Are they going to have a meeting here? The larger of the two receptionists, the senior receptionist, was spreading out a map on the table. Sitting at the head of the table was the muscular figure I had seen on the third floor before. Could that person be the Guildmaster? Then there was a slightly chubby middle-aged man, Chubby, whom I had never seen before. Additionally, the Nayo adventurer and another person from the alley were there too. Finally, there was the regular drinker, Boozer, whom I knew well.

Is this a meeting with one woman and five men? Two of the male adventurers seem to radiate some sort of ill intent, so I have a bad feeling about this.

Once the preparations for the meeting were complete, the junior receptionist, Junior, started serving tea. Wait, where's my tea? Junior didn't place any tea in front of me and left the room without even looking at me. Why? Our eyes met, didn't they?

I compared everyone else's tea cups on the table. Let's see, the person I'm most familiar with, Boozer, would probably be the easiest to get tea from. So, I created a tiny cup for myself and scooped some tea from Boozer's cup.

Hmm, I can't seem to sip the tea. I tried to mimic the design of the slits in the cups that the Birdcage Maid had prepared for me, but it seems I can't drink from it. Maybe I need to make the slits a bit larger? Oops, I spilled some. Everyone turned to look at me with exasperation.

Sorry, sorry, I'll give up on the tea, let's continue the meeting, shall we? Don't mind me. I signaled with gestures to proceed with the meeting. Oh, was that not clear? Senior receptionist wiped up the spilled tea from the table, trying subtly to capture me. But too bad, I was clinging to my chair.

No, no, I won't be a bother. Really, I won't. Just continue with your discussion. I gestured, hoping they understood. Oh, wait, did I just inadvertently agree to something again?

# Chapter 64 - Meeting

“Alright, let’s get started... Hey, leave the fairy alone.”

Gathering in the conference room were myself, the Guild Master, the Vice Guild Master, three mid-ranked adventurers, and a receptionist providing assistance. For some reason, there was also a fairy present, but I instructed Sarah, the receptionist, to let her be.

The assembled adventurers included Zanten, specializing in investigative missions, Duster, who earned well through accumulated knowledge and was not suitable for combat missions, and Nos, who was capable in combat but we were just here to discuss for now. This arrangement worked out conveniently.

As we were about to start the meeting, the fairy, somehow attached to a tiny chair, was still clinging to it. What’s up with that chair? Did it grow directly from the table? How does it even work? Will it return to its original state? It’s seriously getting in the way if it stays like that...

“Oh well, you can leave the fairy as she is. Let’s begin,” I said.

“Haha, alright then,” replied the Vice Guild Master.

The Vice Guild Master was about to proceed when the fairy began scooping tea from Duster’s cup with a tiny glass.

What’s with that glass? It looks like it’s about to break. Ah, there it goes, it spilled. Seriously, it’s too free-spirited.

“Alright, alright, let’s really start now. So, Nos, is it true that there are signs of a Stampede occurring in this area, as indicated on the map?” the Vice Guild Master asked while pointing to the borderlands on the map’s southern edge.

“Yeah, it’s around there,” Nos replied.

“And we’ve received a request for reinforcements from the capital, but what’s the status of the Border Baron’s forces?” I inquired.

That area in the south fell within the territory of the Border Baron. Typically, in cases of emergencies within his domain, it’s the Border Baron’s forces that handle them. While monster hunting is mainly the responsibility of the Adventurer’s

Guild, in the case of a large-scale disaster like a Stampede, adventurers alone wouldn’t be enough. However, if local adventurers cooperate with the Border Baron’s forces, there shouldn’t be any issues...

“The Border Baron’s forces are indeed mobilized. But it seems this time it’s on a slightly larger scale, which is why they requested reinforcements from the capital,” Nos replied.

Hmm, so they’re anticipating that it might become quite significant even at this stage.

“The projected time of occurrence is approximately 20 days from now, is that correct?” I asked.

“That’s what we’ve been told. Whether it’s accurate or not, I can’t say. The species involved is Goblin-type, and there are several fairly large villages popping up,” Nos informed us.

I see. In the south, goblin species’ infestations happen periodically. This time seems to be no exception. It takes about eight days by carriage or around ten days on foot to get to the border. Going by Nos’s tone, it doesn’t seem like he’s completely grasped the full extent of the situation yet. We’ll need time to share information once we’re on-site.

“Alright, so the plan is this: we’ll send out an advanced party in three days and the main party in five days. Put in a request for urgent reinforcements due to the Goblin Stampede. Gather as many adventurers as possible for support missions if they can’t handle the extermination directly,” I ordered.

“Understood,” Sarah said as she started preparing the request for urgent reinforcements. Sending the main force five days later should allow us several days to prepare on-site. Even if the Stampede occurs a bit earlier, we should have two to three days to get ready.

“Sarah, we’ll have the supplies transported by the main force. Make sure everything is prepared by then. We need to check how many potions we’re short on as well,” I said.

“Agreed. We’ve gathered some, but we should also check with the Apothecary Guild. Regarding food supplies for the main force, should we provide them, or should the advanced party prepare their own?” Sarah asked.

“Right, it’s fine if they prepare their own. By the way, Nos, we’ve heard that the Border Baron is also taking action, but strangely, there has been no communication from him. What’s the situation there?” I questioned.

We hadn’t received any prior communication about this request, which was unusual given the circumstances. It’s an urgent matter, but there’s still about 20 days of time. Something feels off.

“I have the letter with me. Here it is,” Nos said, passing over the sealed letter.

“Hmm, this is indeed sealed with the Border Baron’s crest... Did you personally deliver it?” I asked.

“I did. It was an urgent matter, after all. I was planning to deliver it to the castle after this,” Nos replied.

Well, it’s not uncommon for adventurers to deliver noble’s letters in emergency situations... It’s just that there’s still about 20 days left. There’s something strange about this.

“Ah, can I say something?” Zanten interjected before I could finalize

my thoughts.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Well, Stampedes usually lead to large-scale battles, right? So, bringing along that fairy here might make things a lot easier, you know?” Zanten suggested.

“Hmm.”

He did make a valid point. The report stated that the fairy could provide not only healing but also physical enhancements.

If we strengthen ourselves and then annihilate the threat, even if there are casualties, we can heal them immediately and have them return to the frontline. Having no casualties due to injury is a significant advantage. Stampede operations often lead to many deaths, and many of the wounded retire after the fact. Being able to avoid that is an almost unfair benefit.

However...

“Isn’t this fairy under the management of the royal castle? Shouldn’t we get permission from the castle first?” I pointed out.

“I wonder? Hey, fairy, the people in the southern town are having trouble with monsters. They’d be so happy if you could help them. Can you go and help them?” Zanten asked.

Hey, can’t the fairy understand when people are speaking to her like that? As everyone’s attention turned to the fairy, she nodded repeatedly. Seriously? Then I looked around. Her dignified behavior and clear determination indicated that she was serious about going.

“Oh, she’s going to do it. That’s great!” Zanten exclaimed.

“Wait a moment. We can’t make this decision on our own, can we?” I reminded them.

The Vice Guild Master pointed out a valid concern. We couldn't decide this without getting permission from the royal castle.

“In that case, shouldn't we deliver the letter and the request together now? It might be faster to discuss things directly with the castle rather than through Nos,” I suggested. “Additionally, we can take the opportunity to ask for the fairy's cooperation. It would be better to act quickly in a situation like this, right?”

It seemed a bit hasty, but given the urgency of the matter, Zanten's idea made sense. So, what do you think, fairy? Will you come with us?

# Chapter 65 - Neighborhood Pet Troubles

The muscle-bound specter beckoned me. To go or not to go...

Intentional or not, I had nodded, which meant I should go. But that muscle-bound specter is a bit intimidating. Plus, it looks a bit greasy and moist...

But, on the other hand, I couldn't go with adventurers like Nayo or Alleyman, who exude ill intentions. Mr. Chubby and the receptionist, along with the man who loved his alcohol, were no longer around. They had disappeared somewhere. The remaining three seemed to be indicating that they wanted to take me somewhere, but I'd really prefer a different group.

So, I had a brilliant idea. I spotted the receptionist, who was tidying up teacups. Traveling companions are a must on a journey, so let's go together, and you can be the sacrifice. I clung to the receptionist's head and pointed to the muscle-bound specter.

The receptionist seemed perplexed, judging by their movements. I see, even if I pointed while on their head, they couldn't see it themselves. So, I moved to the receptionist's shoulder and pointed to the muscle-bound specter. I made a gesture as if urging them to follow, moving my pointing hand back and forth. "Go, go!" I conveyed.

The receptionist's expression turned to amazement. Ah, such a skillful transition from an expression of amazement to an even more amazed one. Let's give them the title of "Amazement Pro."

"Hey, hurry up! The muscle-bound specter and the others are leaving without you." I sped up my pointing motion to convey a sense of urgency.

The amazed receptionist quickly followed the muscle-bound specter and boarded a carriage.



Phew. That was close. Thanks to the amazed receptionist being left behind. It would have been just me alone with this group of adventurers if not for them. That would have been dangerous.

The carriage had about four seats, not too large. The muscle-bound specter occupied a space roughly equivalent to two seats. On the opposite side sat the alleyman, who was burly but unexpectedly slim, and the Nayo adventurer, who appeared a bit fragile but had a well-built physique. Burly and intimidating. If the amazed receptionist hadn't joined, would I have been the only one in this group? That was a close call.

The confused receptionist looked at me as they sat huddled between the others. Yes, I understand your feelings even without words. Do you want to go back? Yes, yes, I understand. I want to go back too.

By the way, where were we heading? This was the noble district, right... Could it be the royal castle? Are we really going to the castle? Is this a case of "Your pet interrupted our important meeting, and now you must make amends!" or something?

I never expected to become a party in a neighborhood pet trouble. And not only that, but I might become the representative of the pet side. This was quite an unusual experience. This might be bad. Is the intense battle between the castle and the adventurers going to happen because of me?

No, no, let's not escape reality and act silly. I've been too self-indulgent, taking advantage of my status as the king's pet, and maybe that's why I've become disliked.

Scary. As it turned out, the castle and the adventurers' guild held a rather calm discussion. Good, it seems we might be able to settle this amicably.

The alleyman tried to open up a map. No, no, let me do that! I took the initiative to display a map. See, isn't this much better than a paper map? Hehe, this map is real-time, so I can show you everything. You can even see ships moving on the river nearby. I couldn't help but feel

a mysterious sense of superiority.

The Nayo adventurer pointed southward, moving their hand as they looked at me. Oh, you want to see more to the south?

I expanded the map as far as I could to show the area southward.

Ah, is this about the discussion we had in the adventurers' guild earlier? Back then, we were pointing to the area near the southern mountains. Unfortunately, I can only show up to the city by the river in the south because I've only been that far.

Everyone in the room gasped. That's right, that's right, it's amazing, isn't it? Hehe, after all, this map is real-time, so you can see everything. I started to feel a sense of accomplishment.

The Nayo adventurer pointed even further south, moving their hand, and glanced at me. Hmmm, you want to see more to the south? I expanded the map as wide as it could go.

Ah, could this be about... the continuation of the adventurers' guild meeting? During the guild meeting, they were pointing towards the south mountains. However, unfortunately, I can only display up to the city beyond the river in the south. That's as far as I've been.

Everyone in the room seemed disappointed. Oh well, I guess I couldn't be of much help. But that's fine. If this gathering wasn't about the neighborhood pet trouble, then I'm not at fault.

Phew, I'm relieved.

# Chapter 66 - Request

Phew, finally made it into the castle naturally.

I was getting anxious as there was no communication from the homeland, but the Frontier Operations Team arrived with the Stampede incident report just as planned. I was worried it might change the plans.

I did get a bit nervous when the fairy intruded during the Adventurer's Guild meeting, but that turned out to be rather convenient. After all, I was planning to lure the fairy here.

So, is she the maid who can now use super-powerful magic due to the fairy's influence, as mentioned in the information?

That would be quite a find if we could hook her along with the fairy. Maybe we can make up some reason like being the fairy's caregiver to bring her here?

Oh, here comes someone important at last. Now, let's see who's attending this castle meeting. Hmm, is that the new Prime Minister? Quite young, isn't he? And that must be the First Princess. The Duke of Bastille's daughter is here too.

"Nice to meet you. I am Andi La Hogelt, serving as the Prime Minister, and this is my assistant, Dean La Jinfont."

"I'm Dean. Nice to meet you."

Hmm, the Prime Minister's assistant, huh? Doesn't seem like too crucial a figure, especially without any information.

"The First Princess, Tires La Farsian."

The First Princess doesn't seem to require any special attention at this

stage, but why is she here? Is it related to the fairy in some way?

“Hey, I’m Jacob, the Guildmaster of the Adventurer’s Guild. This is Nos, who brought the information from the frontier.

And this is Zanten.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“Howdy.”

“Well then, let’s get straight to it. We heard about the Stampede that occurred in the frontier. It was mentioned in the letter we received in advance from the Frontier Count, but could you please provide more details?”

It seems the Prime Minister’s assistant is taking charge. Well, the new Prime Minister looks quite young, and the First Princess is too young to manage this. That’s right; it seems the shortage of personnel in the royal castle is as serious as I thought. The letter doesn’t seem to be under suspicion either. It was a good idea to have the Guildmaster deliver it; I wouldn’t have been trusted enough.

Neither Nos nor I speak up, and the conversation continues between the Guildmaster and the Prime Minister’s assistant.

Once the information sharing reaches a certain point, they start talking about the specific location.

“Okay, Nos. Spread out the map.”

Following the Guildmaster’s instructions, Nos is about to spread out the map when the fairy, who has been quietly sitting on the maid’s head all this while, suddenly flies to the center of the table. What’s this? Is she going to do something outlandish again?

“Oh!”

“What is this!?”

“Incredible...”

Wait a minute, what’s this? This map! Recognize it, Duchess of Bastille. I signal to the Duchess of Bastille, who’s sitting in the back row. Did she notice? Yes, she did. Her expression changed, and I could tell by her gaze. Even if you’re sitting in the back row, please try to control your expressions a bit. As everyone’s staring in amazement at the fairy’s map... Yes, it’s quite natural. But more importantly, we need to divert their attention before the others notice.

“Wow, that’s amazing, little fairy. We’d like to see more to the south. Can you show us other areas as well?”

I point further south on the three-dimensional map to appeal, and the map changes to show a wider view. Wow, this is impressive. But now, the areas we don’t want to reveal have become smaller and less noticeable.

“Wow, this is amazing! But why is a part missing?” the Guildmaster asks, understandably confused. It’s natural to be curious. The map provided by the fairy only shows the area from the capital to the western forest and from the capital to the neighboring town south of the river. The map has an irregular wedge shape.

“This is... the map from the capital to the west was most likely where the fairy traveled,” the First Princess spoke up for the first time.

“So, you mean this map is showing where the fairy has been? Has the fairy also been to the town to the south?” I inquire.

“No, I don’t know,” she replies.

I don’t know either. But most likely, she has been there. I mostly kept an eye on her when she came to town, and while she didn’t visit every day, she never skipped two days in a row. In other words, she can

probably fly to the neighboring town and back in one day. That's fast! Faster than I thought.

Realizing that the map provided by the fairy couldn't display the frontier, Nos, who hadn't been speaking, lays out the map he had brought again.

"By the way, we want to take this fairy to the frontier. What do you think, Guildmaster?" I ask.

"Right, we've heard that she can enhance our bodies and heal injuries. It would be helpful to have her with us during the Stampede. Also, the map she just showed us. If she could fly around the anticipated Stampede area before it happens, our operational planning would be more accurate than with paper maps," the Guildmaster adds.

"But will the fairy willingly cooperate with our plans? Relying too much on her may lead to her absence at a crucial moment," the Prime Minister's assistant points out.

That's a rather insightful comment. Is this from personal experience? It seems like the castle is facing some difficulties as well. Perhaps they can't control the fairies at all? Well, maybe I was too optimistic.

"I've already obtained the fairy's consent for her cooperation. She seems eager to accompany us," I reply.

"Is that so? Then I won't oppose it either... Prime Minister, what are your thoughts?" the First Princess asks.

"Well, I believe it would be acceptable. With the current shortage of personnel, it would be beneficial if we can resolve the issue easily with the fairy's assistance," the Prime Minister says.

Great, it's going smoothly. Now, if we can have the fairy's maid come along with her, it would be perfect!

“Silera, would you mind accompanying the fairy to the frontier?” I ask.

“Understood.”

Alright, perfect!

All that’s left is to obtain the Spirit Stones and Holy Crystals!

# Chapter 67 - Secret Meeting

“Is this all? What about the Holy Crystal?”

“I did my best on that one too.”

After the conversation in the castle, I successfully received the Spirit Stone from the Duchess of Bastille in passing.

The Spirit Stone was wrapped in paper and had various scribbles on it. According to the information, the Duchess of Bastille received the Spirit Stone from a member of the Mage Division who had been in hiding. The Mage Division member was the one who collected the Spirit Stone.

“I’ve never seen the Spirit Stone or the Holy Crystal before, but it seems they were incredibly hard to collect. They couldn’t be obtained easily, even by digging through the earth. The fragments of the Spirit Stone are said to be from when the fairy herself collected them.”

“I see. It’s a shame we don’t have the Holy Crystal, but with this much fairy dust, we should be able to slow down the progression of the curse. Well done.”

Huh, as I suspected, she’s on the other side. She’s asking for the Spirit Stone, the Holy Crystal, and the fairy dust because she plans to give them to the mages she summons. I thought it might be mages from the Empire coming, but it seems like it’s from the other side after all.

“By the way, some sections of the underground tunnels have been blocked off. Have they received the new route we provided? And what about the poison in the underground tunnels of the capital? Has it been neutralized?”

“What!? I haven’t heard anything about that! The communication seems to have completely stopped. This is definitely being intercepted somewhere.”



Ever since that fairy arrived, things have been getting strange. But I can't imagine the fairy is responsible for intercepting information from the Empire. It's more likely that the Kingdom is responsible, and some information may have leaked to the Kingdom.

"It's possible that the information we've gathered so far has leaked to the Kingdom. They might be anticipating the Stampede and the surprise attack from the underground tunnels."

"No way! Is that true? If the poison has been neutralized too, many of our plans will fall apart."

"But the plans are already in motion without any orders to stop. We can't stop now, so we'll have to make up for it. Has there been any new developments on your end?"

"There have been some new developments... It seems that the Kingdom has allocated personnel to investigate something in the northern Bastille territory."

"The north? Isn't that the territory of the Duke who is suspected of collaborating with the Empire? Could they have noticed something?"

This situation is getting worse and worse. If the Kingdom is investigating the northern Bastille territory, it could be a problem.

"They shouldn't have noticed anything. There hasn't been any movement so far. Well, as long as they're not being played, that is."

"Well, we'll need to make a decision soon. If we don't, we might not make it through the autumn. First, let's have your troops cause a commotion in the northern area. Even if they get caught, the Duke should be able to handle it, right?"

Currently, the Second Knight Division is supposed to be held up in the Duke's territory. Make sure they can't return by creating a big disturbance."

“I see, understood. I’ll convey that.”

“Also, this is the new route for the underground tunnels. Make sure they don’t accidentally take the old route. And here, take this as well.”

“What’s this?”

“It’s a pass for the noble district of the capital. It should still be valid for a while. We should assume that there’s a predicted surprise attack coming from the underground tunnels. So, use it cleverly to attack from above as well. There’s only one, but it should be enough for a few assassins.”

“I understand. I’ll pass it on.”

“And this is the list of the fairy’s abilities that we’ve discovered so far.”

“Ah, the fairy in question. Is she really that influential?”

“It’s not just influential; she’s incredibly powerful. To put it frankly, there’s no countermeasure. She can enhance the abilities of a group, completely heal them, and display highly detailed three-dimensional maps. When dealing with the Kingdom, she’s someone who must not be present under any circumstances.”

There’s no one else like that irregularity. With just that small fairy, the outcome of a war can change. The side with the fairy will definitely win. It’ll be tough for the Empire unless they handle this very well.

“Well, don’t worry. We’ll keep the fairy... occupied. We’ll erase the maid, so rest assured. So, please take care of the real Stampede. This is a potential location for the Stampede.”

“Understood. Leave it to us.”

Alright, she's oozing with confidence. She's making suggestions, but I'm not sure if they'll be executed. It's like insurance. However, whether it's carried out or not will give me a rough idea of her level of influence.

"Is that all for our discussion? I'll be going now, but I'd like to retrieve the magical tool I used."

She's asking to retrieve the magical tool she used to summon the mage. I see, she's going to collect it.

"Is this it? Can't I keep it for myself?"

"That's a disposable item. It won't be of any use to you even if you have it."

"Well, I think it could be useful. With this, I might be able to eliminate the 'First One' if I use it properly."

They say it's all about how you use

things.

"The 'First One'? What are you talking about? You can keep it, but don't be such a fool as to reveal that you're a spy because of it. And here, take this too."

"Sure, sure. I'll be careful. What's this?"

"When equipped, it allows you to disappear for a certain period of time. Use it wisely."

"Wow! This is great! Are you sure it's okay to just give me these?"

"I'm not just giving them away. We're short on personnel too. We're favoring those who seem useful. Alright then, goodbye."

Wow, she disappeared. Can they use teleportation that frequently over there? No, that can't be right... If they could use teleportation so easily, they wouldn't need to go through all this complicated plotting. They could just teleport in and assassinate the king, and it would be over. There must be some limitations on their teleportation abilities. Well, that's not my concern.

Now, it's time to keep the fairy occupied.

## Chapter 68 - Outing Preparations

The Birdcage Maid and the apprentice maid are busy making preparations for an outing. They're probably getting ready for a trip to the south, as indicated by the map that the muscle-bound maid and the plump one were pointing to.

There must have been some incident down south that required the involvement of adventurers. So, a meeting was held at the guild, and it seems I unintentionally agreed to accompany them to the south.

In other words, it's an outing. Well, I've been wanting to explore places outside this town for a while now. I hide a box of fairy-shaped cookies with a fairy emblem that I received in the bag that the Birdcage Maid is packing. I also keep packing more toys under my clothes.

The cultural level here is lower than in my previous life, so there aren't many fancy toys, but this wooden frog is quite fun. When you press its rear, its legs extend, and it jumps. The kids used to have competitions to see who could make it jump the farthest.

The Birdcage Maid is not only packing my dishes and care sets but also a few dresses in her bag. Well, even though I'm not going in front of nobles, should I wear one?

But going near the southern mountains? I don't know how they plan to get there, but it probably means we won't be back in two to three days. That makes me worry about Doorup-sama. Well, to be precise, it's Doorup-sama's subordinates.

Doorup-sama is always super cheerful when I'm around. However, I once saw him from a distance. Doorup-sama without a smile is actually quite intimidating. He usually has a gentle look, but when he's silent, he emits a formidable aura. I think that's what they call royal aura.

Doorup-sama visits me quite frequently, but when I'm not there, he

obviously can't visit. During that time, Doorup-sama has to emit his royal aura with a straight face. This makes his subordinates feel uneasy.

That's when I came up with a brilliant idea. I'll use a dummy of myself. When I'm not there, I'll have the dummy comfort Doorup-sama. I've modified it so that when someone enters the room while I'm not there, the dummy moves.

On a late night when the Birdcage Maid had left the room, I decided to test the dummy's movements. The dummy started darting around the room in all directions, and the impact was tremendous! But something felt lonely. Maybe it's the lack of sound. If I'm talking about explosions, then it's definitely about light. Explosions are always associated with light.

But even though there's no one here, if I test explosions and lights now, I'll probably get scolded. It's going to be a live performance, but I think I'll be okay. I have a feeling it'll work. With the dummy doll flying around, making loud noises and emitting bright lights, Doorup-sama is sure to remember me with a smile.

And when he smiles, his subordinates won't feel intimidated.

What a fantastic solution! My talent truly knows no bounds.

The next day arrives, and I thought today would be the day we depart. However, there's no sign of preparations for departure. Even when I approach the window, the Birdcage Maid doesn't perform her strange dance. It seems that today's schedule is empty.

When will we leave? I'm supposed to accompany them, right?

## Chapter 69 - Departure

Since it seemed like we wouldn't be departing today, I reconfigured my dummy to activate only after ten days. I didn't want it to accidentally activate before our departure.

Initially, the purpose of the dummy was to provide comfort, but for some reason, it seemed to have transitioned into becoming a prankster along the way. Pranks aren't as funny if they're discovered, so I had to make sure it stayed hidden.

Later, I decided to visit the Adventurer's Guild to see what was happening.

I see, that's why we haven't departed yet. The guild was bustling with adventurers, and the receptionist ladies were busy organizing them. Other guild staff members were also working tirelessly. It was probably the period for recruiting participants. There was a line forming at the reception counter.

Wow, there are more people going on this trip than I thought. Is it a large-scale expedition? However, Liquor Man was still sitting in the corner of the cafeteria, sipping his liquor. He seems uninterested, but I wonder if he's not joining? I thought about asking for some of his food, but unfortunately, he was just drinking.

As soon as the receptionist girl saw me, she let out a startled "heh." Was that a greeting in the otherworldly language?

Surely it wasn't a scream, right? It's unimaginable to scream upon seeing someone as cute as me. Why is she making such a despairing expression?

Ah, maybe it's because I brought her with me to the castle yesterday, and it traumatized her. Well, if ordinary people suddenly find themselves at a meeting of important figures in a castle, they might feel a bit frightened. I get it now. But I'm fine because I'm the royal pet and a castle affiliate.

The chubby man I saw at yesterday's meeting also had a stern expression. I followed him when he seemed like he was going somewhere, and he was busy loading up a lot of luggage onto a ship.

I see, so we're going by ship? But I thought the destination was near the river. Maybe we'll head south by ship and then go west overland from there. Hehe, I've never been on a boat trip, so I'm getting excited!

I explored the ship further, still thinking we were going by boat. However, my efforts were in vain. It turned out that we would travel overland by horse-drawn carriage instead! Give me back my excitement! Carriages tend to be quite bumpy.

Moreover, there weren't as many people as I initially thought. There were around ten people or so. First of all, the apprentice maid wasn't there. There was only the Birdcage Maid serving me.

Three days after the meeting at the Adventurer's Guild, I was carried away in the cage along with the Birdcage Maid, departing from the city in a castle carriage. There were three other carriages waiting outside the city, totaling four carriages for our journey.

Muscle Lady, Nayo Adventurer, and the shady alley adventurers, including those who seemed to exude malicious intent, three in total, were also present. In addition, there were four regular adventurers. The coachman of the carriage I was in brought the total number of humans to twelve, along with one fairy companion, making up our traveling party.

Hmm, is this a reconnaissance team? Perhaps the advance team travels by land first to prepare something, while the main force arrives later by ship with all the heavy cargo. The main force seemed like they were having more fun.

Currently, I'm inside a cage hung on the wall of the carriage. I've made the cage hover slightly to ensure a comfortable carriage ride without any swaying. At the beginning, it was quite rough. When the carriage departed with the cage still hanging on the wall, the cage rattled back and forth. Inside, I was going crazy, seriously. Thankfully,



I managed to achieve a comfortable carriage ride without any swaying.

Well then, it might not have been a boat trip, but I'm still going to enjoy this!

# Chapter 70 - On the Road

The four carriages rattled along the country road through the picturesque countryside. In front of us stood a towering mountain, its size seemingly unchanging no matter how far we progressed. It felt like we weren't making any progress at all, but we had covered quite a distance.

The countryside looked familiar; I had seen it when we arrived. However, the crops seemed to have grown more than when I traveled from the western forest to the capital. The sight of the carriage moving through the fields with the crops swaying in the wind gave off a serene feeling. In other words, it was a bit monotonous and boring.

Even Rainbow, who had initially boosted my excitement when I first arrived in this world, had become a part of my daily routine by now.

I decided to take out some toys from my bag to pass the time, but Birdcage Maid promptly blocked my way. Ugh. There are some toys in that bag for killing time; can you please open it for me? No? I see.

I slipped through the carriage's ceiling and went outside, thinking about checking on what the two female adventurers were doing. However, it turned into a big fuss.

First, the carriage I was on stopped and began ringing a loud bell. Then, the other three carriages stopped, and people hurriedly disembarked. Wondering what was happening, I saw everyone looking relieved upon spotting me. Seriously?

Was that bell ringing a measure to prevent my escape? Come on, I have no intentions of running away. How badly do they want to take me south...

During breaks along the way and during our camp at night, I socialized with the adventurers. The two women were quite friendly towards me. They would pat my head and offer me jerky. They seemed to appreciate everything I did and got a bit carried away, even

posing for them. Birdcage Maid took the lead in preparing everyone's meals.

On the second day, the unchanging scenery became interesting again in the late afternoon. A town! We camped outside yesterday, but are we staying in a town today? With such carefree thoughts, I found myself dressed in a dress by Birdcage Maid. What's going on?

As we entered the town, a crowd had gathered. It's even more crowded than the castle's town, isn't it? Some people seemed to be praying, and there was an enthusiastic atmosphere. When I peered out of the carriage window, cheers erupted. Could it be that this crowd is here to see me?

Hahaha. Well, I guess fairies are rare here, so it makes sense. A fairy from the castle is coming! Seriously!? Let's go see! I understand why they're excited. Being popular is tough, you know? I waved my hand to the crowd. The cheers grew louder. This... might become addictive. Worship me even more!

While I was enjoying the attention, the carriage came to a halt. Birdcage Maid pointed to the cage, and I obediently climbed back inside. Accompanied by the two female adventurers and Birdcage Maid, I entered a building where it was full of injured or sick people. Is this a hospital? I see, so they've come to offer comfort to a hospital. All we need to do is heal them, right? Let's do this.

There was cheering all around. Some were laughing, some crying, some running, and others came to pray. Well, that's good, I guess.

But, you know, I don't think it's entirely a good thing. When you become reliant on a fairy who can heal anything, it might hinder the development of local medical technology, don't you think? I wonder what they really think about it.

Well, if they ask me to heal, I'll do it, though. I can't be heartless when faced with injured people who are suffering.

That night, we stayed in a grand mansion. There was a middle-aged man who I assume is a nobleman, and he greeted me obsequiously.

Since the adventurers weren't here, perhaps they went to an inn in the town?

It wasn't as grand as the castle, but the mansion was quite stylish. I was about to embark on an exploration when Birdcage Maid performed a mysterious dance. You don't want me to go? You really don't? I see.

But well, we get to stay in such an impressive mansion. Just that alone makes it feel like a real trip.

# Chapter 71 - New News

“Mr. Duster, it seems you didn’t end up joining after all.”

Mr. Duster was once again drowning his sorrows in the guild’s attached tavern, just like any other day. Currently, there was an urgent request for dealing with the Stampede in the south, and almost everyone had gone there. The main team had set out four days ago, and some guild staff had gone along as well.

So, there were no senior members around now. The sub-master had stayed behind in the capital, but it seemed there were various issues, and she was currently absent from the guild. Therefore, at this moment, there were only Mr. Duster and me on the guild’s first floor. There were office staff on the second floor, but they rarely came down. The adventurers who hadn’t gone on the emergency request were also absent, dealing with other tasks or such.

“Ah, yeah. I’m not really cut out for extermination missions.”

“Come on, just a little while ago, you were helping with monster extermination, weren’t you? Even lower-ranked folks are going this time.”

“No... Everyone’s probably in great shape thanks to the fairy’s influence, right? They’ll be fine without me.”

“Oh, come on.”

Mr. Duster practically lived at the guild and only took on a request maybe once every few days. But his success rate was almost 100%. Many people made fun of him, but many also respected him. If you asked, he had a wealth of knowledge stored up and was said to be unmatched in terms of efficient actions. Even though he was so socially awkward, even newcomers would ask him questions.

As Mr. Duster and I were having this exchange, someone suddenly

rushed into the guild.

“Urgent! There’s a Stampede happening! It’s not the one you’re all dealing with!”

“What? We already know about it. It’s fine. Everyone’s out dealing with it.”

This person was, if I recall correctly, one of the gatekeepers from the west gate. Why did he come to report this now?

“No, no! It’s not the one you’re all dealing with! There’s another Stampede happening right west of the capital! There are injured people. Do you have any healing potions?”

“Really? That’s terrible! Healing potions... well, most of them were taken to the southern expedition, but how serious are the injuries?”

“One in critical condition, one severely injured, and three with minor injuries. The critically injured one probably won’t make it, but we’ll need nearly ten regular potions.”

“Critical condition! Uh, are the injured at the west gate? How large is the Stampede?”

“Yes, the injured are at the west gate. As for the scale... according to the adventurers, there were around 500 orcs.”

“500 orcs!? There aren’t supposed to be orcs near the capital, right? Um, so, ten healing potions, right?”

The guild didn’t have many healing potions left. We had just received a small shipment from the clinic. If there were any, it would be at the apothecary guild... but we needed to deal with the Stampede first! Oh no...

“Mr. Duster, please go and gather all the office staff on the second floor! All of them! Then, head to the west gate to assess the situation and come back immediately! If you encounter any other adventurers on the way, instruct them to come to the guild for an emergency assembly! I’ll check if there are any healing potions left at the apothecary guild!”

“Wait, wait a moment.”

A young apothecary followed me. The man who had condescendingly greeted us earlier also followed.

“Is this the way? Underground? Open it, come on, quickly!”

“Wait, wait, I’ll open it for you.”

With that, we descended into the basement warehouse.

“They’re here! They’re here, there are so many!”

“What? Really? When I checked last time, it was completely empty. Master, you haven’t restocked healing potions, right?

You didn’t make any recently, did you?”

“Mmm, I don’t know!?”

“Right now! That doesn’t matter! We need to transport them! Please help me!”

“Wait, wait, I’ve never seen potions like these before. I don’t know their effects.”

“Effects?!”

I scratched my arm and applied one of the potions.

“I’m healed. There’s an effect! I don’t know the specifics, but it’s an exceptionally quick recovery. It’s better than nothing! You there, grab twenty and take them to the west gate. There are injured people there, so hurry!”

The gatekeeper had said ten would be enough. I didn’t know the specifics of their effects, but the wounds healed instantly.

More importantly, they came in such beautiful, likely expensive bottles, with elegant patterns resembling fairies. The bottles seemed valuable, so the potions themselves couldn’t be too shabby. They had to be better than nothing. With twenty of them, they should manage somehow.

“Um, next, we’ll need to check if the adventurer’s guild has any stock. Then, we’ll return to the guild and plan our response.”

I hurriedly carried four potions, two in each hand, back to the adventurer’s guild. Upon arrival, I found the office staff and the gatekeeper gathered in the meeting room. The sub-master hadn’t returned yet.

“Sorry for the wait. First, it looks like we’re okay with the healing potions. I had twenty potions delivered to the west gate just now. Currently, most adventurers are not in the capital, but before the sub-master returns, let’s confirm the situation.

Also, I’m sorry, but leaving the first floor unmanned is a concern. Let’s relocate to the inside of the first-floor reception counter.”

With 500 orcs, this was turning into quite a disaster. There were no reliable seniors or intimidating guild masters around.

I had to handle this somehow!



## Chapter 72 - Potion

“Get a grip, you’ll be fine! I’ve gone to get some healing potions!”

“Ah...uh...”

As soon as I arrived at the west gate, I wanted to approach the guards and ask them questions, but it was really hard to do so. But I couldn’t just stand there without saying anything.

“Excuse me, can I ask you something?”

“What is it? We’re busy right now! Are you an adventurer? Did you bring healing potions?”

“No, it’s not about that...”

“Then what is it?”

Oh no, I messed up. I’ve irritated them.

“Mr. Duster!”

“Oh, it’s you guys...”

The group of five injured adventurers were acquaintances of mine. Well, almost all the adventurers based in the capital were acquaintances in some way. We weren’t particularly close, but seeing acquaintances return severely injured was always unsettling.

Upon closer inspection, one of them seemed beyond help. They were still young. I’ve seen rookies get overconfident and meet their demise before, but this situation was completely unexpected. It was just bad luck. I didn’t know what to say or how to comfort them.

“...Sorry. Let me go up there for a moment.”

Feeling uncomfortable in their presence, I climbed one of the two observation towers on the city gate. There was already a guard up there, staring into the distance.

“I heard it’s a Stampede. Can you see it already?”

“Hmm, are you an adventurer? I can faintly see it in the distance. But it still looks like just a mass of something. The injured adventurers who returned said it’s orcs, but we should have at least a day or two before it reaches us.”

“I see...”

I, too, looked in the direction the guards were watching. What...? I can see it? It’s so far away, yet I can see it clearly. Is this also due to the influence of the fairies? Those are definitely orcs. They were said to be around 500, but I wouldn’t be surprised if there were nearly 1,000... and almost half of them are High Orcs, and there are even Orc Generals... around a hundred of them, and an Orc King. This is bad.

“I understand. I’ll go back to the guild for now, but do you have any other information?”

“No, I don’t have anything specific. The adventurers down there might know more. Did you ask them?”

It seemed the guards hadn’t gathered much information yet, either because they couldn’t or because information hadn’t spread. In any case, I needed to speak to the people below again.

“Not yet. I’ll ask them. Thank you.”

Saying that, I descended. Just then, a young man carrying a crate ran up. His attire indicated he was from the apothecary guild. It seems he

managed to secure healing potions.

“I’m sorry! I’ve brought some potions! Where are the injured?”

“Thank goodness! Over here! Help this person! Please!”

“Uh... already... okay.”

The injured adventurer’s friend called for the apothecary, but the young apothecary was trembling in shock. It was that serious. To be honest, using a potion now seemed futile...

“Whoa!”

“It’s amazing!”

“Where is this...?”

What...? The person who seemed beyond help a moment ago is suddenly healed? They’re up and moving!

“You did it! Thank you so much! My friend has been saved!”

“Please! Help this one too! Please!”

“Yes, of course!”

“Wow, what’s with this effect?”

“I’m healed! Hey, can anyone explain this? I can return to the city!”

“This is incredible!”

“You, are you from the apothecary guild? Your guild is amazing!”

“Huh? Wait, I’m still young! This effect, it’s unbelievable. Scary.”

“Huh? Is that so?”

“Thank you! Thank you so much! Thanks to you, our friends are safe!”

“Yes.”

What’s with these reactions? It’s true that the effect is extraordinary, but wasn’t this potion provided by the apothecary guild? Well, for now, the situation here seems to be under control. I need to return to the guild quickly.

“You guys, sorry to bother you, but if you can move, please come to the adventurer’s guild.”

“Oh, Mr. Duster. How about you? Can you go to the guild?”

“Yeah, no problem at all. In fact, I feel better than ever.”

“Me too. Right now, my body feels lighter than it ever has!”

“Huh? What’s going on? This is creepy.”

The young apothecary muttered something quietly.

The two who had suffered severe injuries were completely healed, but the three with minor injuries remained the same.

They probably thought they couldn’t afford to pay the price for this extraordinary effect. It was understandable. However, they seemed well enough to move around without any issues. Alright, let’s take all five of them with us.

“Alright then, let’s hurry back to the guild.”

## **Chapter 73 - The Fairy Has A Forecast**

“Oh, Mr. Duster! Perfect timing, Submaster just returned, and you’re here too!”

As we were checking the situation inside the guild counter, Submaster finally arrived, followed shortly by Mr. Duster.

There was also a new party trailing behind Mr. Duster.

“Oh, these are the injured adventurers. They are fine now, as you can see.”

“That’s a relief!”

“Great, they’re safe! Now, if you don’t mind, let me quickly go over the situation from the beginning.”

Submaster took charge of the discussion, which was a relief for me. With this, my job was almost done.

“First, have we contacted the Royal Castle?”

“Someone else is currently running to deliver the message.”

“Alright, so first of all, we’re glad these five are safe. Now, let’s discuss the Stampede incident and why it was identified as a Stampede.”

“Yeah, we were heading to the ‘Beginner’s Woods.’”

According to the injured adventurers, these five had set out for a place called the ‘Beginner’s Woods,’ which was a common hunting ground for newcomers. It’s a bit confusing, but unlike the Western Woods, there’s a smaller forest closer to the capital known as the ‘Beginner’s Woods.’ While they were headed there, a horde of orcs suddenly emerged from the forest and attacked.

“Five hundred orcs came out of the woods all of a sudden? The ‘Beginner’s Woods’ is considered safe enough that even nobles go rabbit hunting there. It’s not a place where 500 orcs would suddenly appear.”

“But we saw it!”

“Yeah, we’re not lying!”

“No, we’re not saying you’re lying. Let’s continue. Mr. Duster, how was it at the West Gate?”

“Oh, they said there were about 500 orcs, but there were nearly 1,000. Almost half of them were High Orcs, around 100

Orc Generals, and I even confirmed one Orc King.”

“What? Really?”

“What did you say? A thousand orcs, including a king?”

“Is that true?”

“Come on, they shouldn’t have been able to see the monsters from the West Gate yet. How did they confirm this?”

The gatekeeper challenged Mr. Duster’s report. Indeed, if it were within visual range, such detailed information should have spread much earlier. Specific numbers like these were unheard of.

“Well, we saw them... It’s like our eyesight improved thanks to the influence of the fairies.”

“Is that so? Well, if it’s the fairies, then it must be true. The senior adventurers at the West Gate were also talking about how their old

injuries were healing thanks to the fairies.”

I heard about that too! People who got close to the fairies reported that their health was improving rapidly! On the contrary, everything seems to be going wrong for me!

“I see. Let’s treat this as a fact for now.”

“And then... Two of them were completely healed by the potions brought by the young apothecary. One of them was on the brink of death.”

“Yeah, that was amazing!”

“Yeah, we thought for sure he was a goner... Ugh, it’s making me emotional.”

“It’s true, we’re saved!”

“That’s great, my boy made it just in time!”

“Alright, so is this the same potion that Risty found at the apothecary guild?”

“Probably. The apothecary guild had shelves full of these with patterns like fairy wings on the bottles! Right now, they’re having people from the apothecary guild deliver 20 bottles to the West Gate, and they brought the ones at the gate to the adventurer’s guild. There are still more to go back and forth.”

“Yes, it was definitely the same.”

“...Is this it? The apothecary guild has been saying they don’t have any potions in stock.”

“They told me the same when I went there.”

“Wait, are you saying that the apothecary guild was hiding these potions?”

“No, it’s not that. These bottles have patterns like fairy wings, and their healing effects are abnormal... Could it be...”

Submaster seemed to have figured everything out with a dramatic air. Sometimes Submaster likes to draw things out, and it’s annoying.

“What’s going on? Please explain without being so mysterious!”

“Alright, alright, let me explain without being dramatic. Everything seems to be going according to the Fairy’s plan.”

“The Fairy? What do you mean?”

When you talk about fairies, you mean that fairy, right? I don’t have a very good impression of them...

“First of all, it seems that this Stampede was likely caused by human actions. It was artificially induced.”

“What? Is that true?”

“What are you saying?”

“Unbelievable! How can humans cause a Stampede?”

“I don’t know the details of how it was done. But if we’re talking about who did it, it’s most likely the Empire.”

“The Empire!”



“I see...”

We all agreed with Submaster’s assertion of the culprit. It seemed plausible; if anyone would do it, it would be the Empire.

“First of all, in a small place like the ‘Beginner’s Woods,’ a Stampede of even 50 goblins, let alone 1,000 orcs, shouldn’t occur. Moreover, orcs are not known to inhabit the vicinity of the capital. And speaking frankly, the guards at the Western Gate have the lowest level of training. Though I shouldn’t say this in front of the Western gatekeeper, the guards in the West are not as well-trained as those in the East.”

“Hmm... You’re right. The West does have a reputation for being a bit of a dumping ground for injured soldiers. It’s true their training is not up to par. Some problems that wouldn’t be tolerated in the East often go unnoticed in the West.”

The Western gatekeeper solemnly agreed with Submaster’s assessment. Really? The West Gate is like that? Maybe it’s because the neighboring country to the west is friendly, unlike the Empire to the east?

“The reason why the Empire is suspected as the culprit is because a few days before the flooding of the Twin Gods’

Temple, a large number of Imperial spies were apprehended. Speculation arose from the number of people caught that the Empire might break the ceasefire agreement soon.”

Oh, now that you mention it, there was a day shortly after it started raining again when the knights from the castle were running all over the town. They had captured Imperial spies, right?

“The mass arrests of Imperial spies were apparently prompted by the fact that the fairies appeared in the city. The fairies likely flew around the city to inform us of the presence of Imperial spies.”

“Hmm, isn’t that just speculation?”

“Indeed, having only that piece of evidence doesn’t confirm anything. But this potion, too, is probably something the fairies prepared. Healing someone on the brink of death in an instant, even with an expensive potion, is likely impossible.

I’ve never heard of such a thing. If it has such effects, it’s almost like a legendary elixir. Humans wouldn’t be capable of making it.”

“So, you’re saying the fairies predicted this Stampede and left behind these potions?”

“Yes. I personally checked the apothecary guild’s warehouse shortly after it started raining in the capital, just before the flooding. At that time, the warehouse was almost empty. So, it’s likely that the fairies prepared these after that.”

“Hmm... That fairy, on the day when we received news of the Stampede in the borderlands, she kidnapped me and took me to the castle. Did that have some meaning too?”

“That was probably to acclimate you to dealing with important figures. The fairies anticipated that a large number of people would move to the borderlands and that a Stampede would also occur in the capital. So, they brought you to the castle to familiarize you with interacting with high-ranking individuals. Risty, during my absence, you did an excellent job.”

“Huh, really? Hehe. But... kidnapping me to the castle had a meaning like that? What about the first day I came to the adventurer’s guild? I caused a huge commotion!”

“That, we can’t be certain yet, but... it was probably when they spotted you, Mr. Duster.”

“Huh? Me?”

“Yes, you had more interactions with the fairies than anyone else among the adventurers. And despite the critical situation, with most

key personnel absent, you stayed in the capital... It doesn't seem like a mere coincidence. Have you been entrusted with something by the fairies, or have you been more affected by them than others?"

"N-No... Well, it's true my old injuries have healed, and I'm feeling great. But wouldn't that apply to the others too?"

"True, many have benefited from the fairies' influence. Ah... but yes, it might be those eyes."

"Eyes?"

"Yes. Mr. Duster, did you see it? The composition of orcs in terms of numbers and types that the Western gate guards couldn't see."

"Ah!"

"Oh!"

"Oh, I see. So that's why we could see the orcs that they couldn't!"

"Amazing! The fairies are amazing!"

"Yeah, fairies are incredible!"

"Oh, it's hopeless, we thought, but now I feel like we can get through this safely!"

"That's right! Just having these potions that can fully heal even the brink of death changes the feeling of security completely!"

"Yeah! We can do this!"

"Uooh, we'll show them!"

“Incredible! Everyone’s morale has skyrocketed! Is this also the effect of the fairies, I mean, Fairy-sama? Amazing!

Fairy-sama knows everything!”

# Chapter 74 - Stampede

“Uwaaahhh!”

Boom!

With a thunderous roar from the Chief Magician of the Royal Castle, a streak of flames shot into the horde of orcs, causing two to three of them to be blown away. It had been two days since news of the Stampede near the capital reached us, and the orc horde had finally reached the city.

“Nggghhh!”

Boom!

Thanks to the improved vision from the influence of the fairies, I stood on the watchtower above the Western Gate, overseeing the entire situation and relaying information to Submaster in real-time. Submaster was in charge of overall command.

While some of the guards at the Western Gate had healed from their old injuries and were now fit for battle, the majority were still injured or unwell, making it difficult for them to fight in the Stampede. To compensate for this, reinforcements were called in from the East and South Gates. Additionally, most of the city’s guards responsible for maintaining law and order were present here. Five Royal Knights and the Chief Magician from the Royal Castle were also participating. Of course, the adventurers had joined the battle as well, but there were only about thirty adventurers left in the capital.

“Ongaaah!”

Boom!

We had made some preparations over the past two days. During this

time, Submaster and the receptionist had established criteria for the use of fairy potions and regular healing potions, which were then disseminated to the staff in the city's infirmaries.

To boost morale, Submaster had been touting the availability of fairy potions, but in reality, there was only enough to fill one guild warehouse. If every combatant here used them five times each, they would run out. Therefore, we established criteria based on the severity of injuries: minimal treatment, treatment with regular healing potions, a quarter of a fairy potion, half a fairy potion, or a full bottle.

“Ubaruahhh!”

Boom!

Simultaneously, various other tasks were being carried out, including evacuating civilians, setting up evacuation sites, preparing for their reception, sealing off the western side, and retrieving civilians who had already ventured outside the city. Even the receptionist, who wasn't present here, was likely handling civilians at the evacuation sites.

“Dabaaahhh!”

Boom!

“One more.”

Glug, glug...

“Huah! My strength is surging!”

In addition to the fairy potions, we had found mana replenishment potions in the guild's warehouse two days ago. As a result, the strategy for this Stampede was for the Chief Magician to continuously cast spells from the city walls while using mana replenishment potions.

“Iguuwaahhh!”

Boom!

“Incredible. She’s known as the Kingdom’s Devil for a reason...”

“Yeah, even though she’s gotten too old to go to the battlefield now, back in the day, she could blow enemies away like it was nothing. I thought they were exaggerating, but seeing it for real, it’s amazing...”

“Yeah, I thought she was called the Kingdom’s Devil because she shouts like a demon. If she appeared as an enemy, I’d definitely think she’s a demon.”

“But she’s on our side! She’s reliable!”

“Indeed!”

Currently, there was only one person among the castle’s mages who could use combat magic properly because of their advanced age. The other mages in the capital couldn’t handle magic well enough to be effective in this Stampede.

However, even with just one person, it was a significant force. Initially, the rookie adventurers were nervous, but now they seemed calm as they watched the orcs getting blown away one by one.

“Zesutooo!”

Boom!

“There, to the right. Two orcs got through.”

“Two on the right! Teams of five, ten people, respond!”

So far, the operation was going well. The Chief Magician occasionally

missed an orc, but I would confirm it and Submaster would give instructions to the entire group. For regular orcs, surrounding them with several people seemed to work. In the case of High Orcs, the highly trained Eastern group would handle them, and if it still proved dangerous, the Royal Knights would cover them. However, something felt off...

“Zabaaahhh!”

Boom!

“We’re expecting it soon...”

Submaster muttered. The Orc General was approaching the range of the Chief Magician’s spells. Whether magic would be effective against the General or not would determine whether we could easily overcome this Stampede. Now, let’s see what happens...

“Screaaam!”

Boom!

“Uh-oh, it’s not working!”

“Eastern team, intercept the General! Chief Magician, continue reducing their numbers!”

“Let’s go!”

“Uwaaah!”

The highly skilled Eastern team bravely confronted the General, but something was wrong. They weren’t inflicting any damage.

“Fall back, I’ll take over!”



The Royal Knights tried to provide cover, but it didn't look good.

"They got through, this is bad."

"What's this...?"

"It's no use, Chief Magician! I'll cover, you focus on reducing their numbers!"

I had no choice; I couldn't afford to complain about my inexperience in combat. I jumped from the watchtower to confront the General who had broken through. Normally, jumping from a watchtower would result in significant damage, but thanks to the influence of the fairies, I landed perfectly fine.

"D-Duster-san!?"

One of the rookies said something, but there was no time for that now. I saw the General raising its arm. It's alright; I can see it. As the General swung its right arm downwards, I dodged to the left, moving towards its right flank. With such a massive arm, there must be a blind spot here, right? Your humanoid shape is your downfall; the same tactics used against humans will work here.

The General turned towards me, swinging its right arm, but I bent down to avoid it while striking back. It worked! Even a regular iron sword could deal damage. So, it's that simple! I severed the General's head with a counterattack.

"Amazing!"

"Hey, was Duster-san always this strong!?"

"Wow!"

"Phewww!"

Boom!

“Incredible, buddy!”

One of the Royal Knights approached me.

“Yeah, yeah...”

“What’s wrong? You could be more confident; it would be cooler.”

Even if you say that, I’m not good at talking. I wish they’d just leave me alone.

“Screaaam!”

Boom!

“Duster-san! Can you take on a hundred Orc Generals like that!?”

Submaster asked. A hundred of those... can I handle it? Dealing with two or three at once should be fine, but the problem is how long I can keep this up. Damn it, if I had known this would happen, I should have confirmed my strength earlier.

Senpai once said that neglecting information gathering would lead to death. However, if I admit I can’t handle it, it would lower morale.

“Uh, well, probably, I should be fine.”

“Hey, that’s not the answer you should give!”

What’s this? One of the Royal Knights chimed in.

“Right now, you’re crucial. You’re a hero. Have confidence. Your actions can change morale with a single word. Your actions can

determine whether we survive this Stampede! Even if it's a lie, say, 'Absolutely... no problem at all...!'

Well...

"Absolutely... no problem at all..."

"Understood! We're counting on you! Here comes the next wave!"

"Alright, leave it to me! I'll definitely take them down!"

If it's come to this, I'll give it my all. Even if I make some mistakes, we have the fairy potions. Absolutely... no problem at all!

# Chapter 75 - Decision

I woke up in the morning and called my personal maid as usual, but she didn't come. If my personal maid wasn't there, I couldn't properly prepare myself, so I quickly put on a coat over my nightwear and left my room.

It was abnormal for my personal maid not to respond when I called. My mother had warned me to keep an eye on that maid, who frequently went to the castle's underground. If that was the case this time as well, then her destination must be the underground. I rushed to the underground.

The castle's underground was like a maze, and if you weren't used to it, you could easily get lost. I thought that my personal maid wouldn't be easy to find, but luckily, I found her in the deepest part of the castle's underground. However, what was she doing? She seemed to be muttering to herself while facing the wall.

"What are you doing?"

"Why are you here?"

"I knew that you often visited the underground behind my back."

"Hahaha, you're quite perceptive, aren't you? But it's too late now! I'll kill you! I'll exterminate the entire royal family!

Then my father will be the next king! I'll become the next princess, you see!"

Was the maid mad? She continued to strike the wall. But just a moment later, with a rumbling sound, the wall opened!

"Well, you're late. I can finally get in."

“Hmph, right on time. But more importantly, that one over there is our target.”

Imperial soldiers!? Damn it, I should have brought someone with me. Why did I come alone? I can't use magic, or at least that's what they think. During my magic practice, I was always left alone, so they couldn't be certain. I turned on my heels and started running. The enemy was blocking the corridor with their shields. They're idiots; because I was practicing magic alone, they couldn't confirm whether I could use it or not. I started running.

“O-hohoho! It's futile to run!”

Zzshh, Boom!

Damn it, they're using magic. There must be a mage among them. They're pulling out all the stops by deploying a rare mage. If one of those spells hits me, I'm done for. I turned a corner in the corridor. Going to the treasure room would be a detour, but in a straight corridor, I'd be an easy target.

When the enemies were about to peek out from the corridor, I threw the lamp I was holding. It would be great if it hit, but even if it didn't, it would serve as a distraction. Fortunately, the corridor was lit with installed magical devices, so even though it was underground, it wasn't pitch dark.

“Princess!? What's happening?”

I had run around the maze-like corridors and finally reached the treasure room. There were two guards, which seemed too few to handle intruders.

“Enemy attack! Imperial soldiers have infiltrated through the lowest level secret passage!”

“What!? Are you serious?”

“Huff, huff... Okay, okay... Can this treasure room be locked from the inside?”

“Uh, well, yes, it can be locked.”

“Good, we’ll barricade ourselves in. There are too many enemies out there, and the three of us can’t resist them.”

“Understood. Alright, open it.”

The two guards simultaneously inserted their keys into the lock. I see, the treasure room couldn’t be opened by just one person. There were many things about the inner workings of the castle that I hadn’t been informed of. Maybe I truly wasn’t expected to contribute anything to this kingdom.

“Alright. Princess, please step inside.”

“Thank you.”

With the treasure room door closed, we could finally catch our breath, but what should we do from here? I couldn’t imagine there was any food inside. Holding out in here wouldn’t last long.

“Ohohoho! The princess of the royal family locked up in a room with two men in her nightwear! How scandalous! Since you’re so capable, are you preparing for a future heir? But I’ll put an end to that!”

Father was talkative like that, too. Annoying, but there was a chance she might let something useful slip, so I couldn’t ignore her. Mother always said to listen carefully to what others had to say.

“Hey, leave ten behind. The rest should head up. Go!”

Oh no, it was too early. The attack came right after the Stampede incident was discovered, only two days ago. Could they have prepared an invasion of the royal castle so quickly? How long had that maid

been going to the underground? Did the Empire really cause the Stampede incident? What about the Stampede incidents in the border regions? Damn it, I know nothing. I'm truly useless!

"Princess, please try to remain calm. There might be a way out of this."

"Do you have a plan to handle this situation?"

Even in this dire situation, the guards remained calm. To be guards for the treasure room, they must have had the ability to handle any situation with composure. It was admirable that they made me believe there might still be a way out of this mess.

"Yes, please have a look over here."

"The Farsian Sword? Why are there five... Replicas?"

"No, this is top-secret, and only a few know about it. All five are genuine, and they're more powerful than the previous swords. They are enchanted fairy swords."

"Fairy swords? Swords from the fairies?"

"Yes. With the red sword, one swing can incinerate distant enemies, the blue sword can cut through enemies with blades of water, the green sword can mow down enemies with blades of wind, the brown sword can pierce enemies with gravel, and the yellow sword can erase enemies with beams of light."

"Just by swinging them? I'm not knowledgeable in combat, but aren't these incredibly powerful?"

"Yes, using these swords, the Imperial soldiers will be no match. Please take one."

“Uh, they’re heavy... I don’t think I can swing them. But this is top-secret, right? Using them without permission...”

No, this is an emergency. When your country is at stake, what’s the point of hesitating? Even if I couldn’t swing the sword that could defeat distant enemies in one swing, I was still a member of the royal family. I should be able to take responsibility for using it. If I couldn’t do it myself, I could have someone capable handle it.

“No, let’s use them. You guards should take them and use them. I’ll take responsibility. Choose which one to use for yourself. And take the remaining three as well.”

“Yes!”

“Understood!”

“First, let’s escape from the treasure room, and then head to King’s Majesty as the top priority. If King’s Majesty is safe, the kingdom still stands. If King’s Majesty and I are in danger simultaneously, prioritize protecting King’s Majesty.”

“That’s right, we’ll go now!”



# Chapter 76 - Enemy Attack

Alright, let's do our best today!

My family is a humble baron's household, but once upon a time, we managed our lands reasonably well. However, due to wars and several years of poor harvests, our finances deteriorated, and I ended up working at the castle when I was nine years old. Our family's financial situation even relies on my modest salary.

I am part of the noble baby boom around the time the first princess was born. However, as a baron, our status was low, and I never had a chance to be a friend of the first princess. Moreover, due to ongoing conflicts with neighboring nations, the first princess's tea parties and social events were rarely held. This made it difficult even for high-ranking noble daughters to establish connections with the first princess.

However, I worked hard as an apprentice maid for the sake of my family and recently seized a significant opportunity.

That's right, I became the personal assistant to the beloved Fairy Lady! Thanks to this, despite my age, I've started earning a high salary.

My esteemed master, the Fairy Lady, has an incredibly charming appearance. Initially, I was motivated solely by the goal of restoring my family's standing, but as I served, I gradually began to feel that I was working for her sake. This must be what the seniors meant by serving one's true master with devotion. This is what it means to have deep respect.

Currently, the Fairy Lady and her personal maid, Silera, are both absent for an extended period, and I'm taking care of things in their absence. To ensure that everything is in perfect order for their return, I've been managing and maintaining the Fairy Lady's room every day. Of course, even today, I've come to check her room in the early morning.

\*Click\*

\*Kaboom!\*

\*Flashes of light!\*

“Aaah!”

What’s happening? As soon as I opened the door to the Fairy Lady’s room and took one step inside, there was a massive explosion! Something hit me, and I tumbled clumsily into the hallway, with cleaning tools scattered around.

“What’s going on!? Are you okay?”

“But...”

“What happened?”

“Your Majesty!”

People who had gathered around the commotion in the hallway were met with the news that there had been an attack.

“It’s an enemy attack! The Fairy Lady’s room exploded! There are magical residue and signs of magical attack; it’s an enemy assault!”

“What!?”

A guard who had rushed over began shouting about the enemy attack. An attack that shattered the room of my beloved master, the Fairy Lady! This is unforgivable! Oh, how quickly things escalated!

“What are you doing? Don’t go into the room! It’s dangerous!”

“But...”

“What’s going on? What is this?”

“Your Queen!”

Several people, including the Queen, arrived in front of the room. Although she used to be an otherworldly presence high above, recently she had been visiting the Fairy Lady’s room frequently, giving me the chance to interact with her a bit.

The Queen questioned, and one of the guards who had rushed to the scene began explaining the situation.

“It’s an enemy attack! There was an explosion in the Fairy Lady’s room, and there are traces of magic; it appears to be an attack from outside.”

“I see. Gather everyone inside the castle immediately, in the main hall. Everyone, except those on essential duties. Those who can’t fight should stay in the inner hall, and those who can fight should secure the main hall. We’ll defend it!”

“Yes!”

Things were getting very serious! Afterward, the castle became bustling with activity, with many people crowded into the largest hall in the castle. I was among them. The high-ranking noblewomen who had private rooms in the castle came in wearing their nightclothes. They must have been sleeping. This kind of commotion hasn’t happened since the day the Fairy Lady came to the castle.

“What’s happening? An enemy attack? Is it for real?”

People who had been gathered without prior knowledge began questioning if this was indeed an enemy attack, but soon, their doubts turned into fear as they heard the intermittent explosions.

“Boom!”

“Boom!”

“Are they getting closer?”

Oh no, it was turning into quite a catastrophe! Toward the front of the hall, the Queen, the Crown Prince, and other important individuals were engaged in a discussion.

“What happened? An enemy attack? Get to the point.”

“Your Majesty, we are currently under attack. The Fairy Lady’s room exploded. There is magical residue, and it seems to be a magical attack from outside.”

“We are under attack? What do you mean by ‘we’?”

“The thing is... according to eyewitnesses, it was... a tattered puppet.”

“A puppet? Are you saying it wasn’t the Fairy Lady?”

“No, it was even more lifeless, just standing there without moving, parallel moving through the air. It didn’t move its arms, legs, or face, but it kept looking in our direction. This lifeless puppet, however, repeatedly crashed into the Imperial soldiers and exploded upon contact.”

“... What in the world?”

# Chapter 77 - Assassin

“Earlier, the Stampede has reached the capital, and the Chief Magician has initiated a counterattack. So far, the operation seems to be going smoothly.”

“I see, understood.”

When news of the Stampede occurring near the capital reached us earlier, I was quite worried about how things would turn out. But for now, it seems like there are no major issues. Over the past two days, the Prime Minister and I have been tirelessly working to handle the situation.

We need provisions to accommodate the evacuees, but the impact of the Fairy's influence has made the western region the most bountiful, and the Stampede happening there is a setback.

The surplus crops from the prosperous western region were meant to be distributed to the still-affected eastern and northern regions, a task I entrusted to my son, Prince Arland, as part of his political training. However, with simultaneous

Stampede incidents occurring in two places within the country, this is an unprecedented situation. I doubt we can manage this effectively.

Our supply lines to the border regions have also been disrupted by the Stampede. Cutting back too much on the food supply to the north and east, where the effects of the recent flooding still linger, might lead to discontent. Especially in the north, where the damage from the recent floods is still evident.

But Bastille, you've done well by stalling the Second Knights. Of course, I've ordered them back now, but they likely won't arrive in time. However, perhaps I can hold you accountable for some of this debt if I investigate your responsibilities further.

Why is it that so many problems are arising during my reign? As I

pondered this, suddenly three figures dressed in black infiltrated through the window!

“What!? Guards! Intruders!”

Assassins, perhaps? I called the guards stationed outside the office to assist, but they likely wouldn’t make it in time. The assassins inside the room were already moving much faster than the guards outside. Were they really assassins? Strange, they seem strangely sluggish for assassins.

I grabbed the ceremonial sword that adorned the wall. In my younger days, I had learned some swordsmanship for self-defense. I wouldn’t go down without a fight.

As the assassins approached slowly, it became unclear whether they intended to kill me. They were slow, oddly slow for assassins, or perhaps... too slow? What’s going on with these individuals? Assassins are usually more agile.

I swung the ceremonial sword at the nearest one, and to my surprise, their body split apart horizontally, falling like twin leaves. They were cut in half.

Huh? Was this ceremonial sword always this sharp? I’ve used this sword for various ceremonial occasions before, such as during knighthood ceremonies, just lightly tapping the shoulders. How did I manage not to decapitate anyone all this time? It’s dangerously sharp.

But for now, it’s fortunate. The sight of me splitting one of them in half seemed to have stunned the other two assassins.

“Your Majesty! Are you unharmed?”

“You scoundrels!”

Two guards who were stationed outside rushed in with swords drawn,

ready to confront the remaining assassins.

However, the assassins had already started to retreat. Too slow, though. There's no way they can escape. As I swung my sword towards the closer assassin, I accidentally cleaved the one behind them in half as well.

Wow, is this sword really okay? It seems to exceed the standards of a ceremonial sword. The stunned guards and even the usually squinting Prime Minister seemed wide-eyed. Their eyes could fit the face of the Fairy.

"Your Majesty, you are unharmed. I'm truly impressed by Your Majesty's skills."

"Hmph, it's just that this sword is exceptionally sharp. Now, who are these people?"

"At first glance, it's hard to tell, but they're definitely assassins. All dressed in black... and their swords seem mass-produced. They don't seem to have any distinctive possessions. How about on your end?"

"Same here. They don't seem to carry anything special."

"Hmm. Well, it's probably the Empire. Attacking during such a busy time. But it seems even the Empire is getting desperate. To send such slow-moving assassins, ha-ha-ha."

Those people from the Empire... even though they have ample territory, they're causing us so much trouble. They're a nuisance with their struggles for the throne, but it's possible that they've lost a lot of talented individuals in the process.

Boom...

"What was that sound? Could it be that someone else has infiltrated?"

Boom...

Boom...

“Was that an explosion? Your Majesty, for safety, get to the center of the room. Chancellor, come over here. The entrance and windows are dangerous. Someone, go fetch help, and if possible, gather information about the situation.”

Following the orders, one of the guards left the room. It's a busy day today; I might not get any sleep tonight, or perhaps eternal rest? No, no, this is not the time for jokes.

“Heh, Your Majesty, you remain composed. Truly remarkable,” the chancellor remarked.

“You, on the other hand, seem too frightened. You'll need to toughen up if you want to be chancellor,” the king replied.

“Haha...”

Bang!

Suddenly, the door burst open, and intruders stormed in. So, there were more infiltrators. The kingdom was indeed in grave danger. We've been barely managing to keep things under control until now.

No, lately, things had been stabilizing, thanks to the Fairy Court. I can't bow my head lightly as king, but I'm truly grateful. If we can just get through this, maybe everything will be fine.

“They're here! It's the king! Surround him!”

“Don't let them!”

There were about ten of them, all imperial soldiers. We had one guard with us. This doesn't look good.



The lead imperial soldier engaged our guard in combat. Hmm? Aren't they a bit weak? Could it be that the assassins weren't weak, but I've grown stronger? Why is that? The only possible explanation is the fruit from the Fairy Court.

Feeling confident, I joined the fight alongside our guard.

"Your Majesty!? Get back!"

"Just watch me. Hmph!"

"Huh?"

As I struck down an enemy with a single blow, some of the imperial soldiers were stunned and paralyzed with shock. Is this alright? Exposing such a vulnerability. Well, never mind, I dealt with that one too.

"Your Majesty! Are you unharmed!?"

Reinforcements arrived from behind the imperial soldiers. It's settled now. Distracted by the reinforcements, three imperial soldiers were easily defeated. There must be one more lurking somewhere. Our guard had defeated one, leaving four more. With the arrival of reinforcements, it was over quickly.

"Oh, Your Majesty, I didn't expect you to be this skilled."

"Incredible..."

"I never imagined they would infiltrate this far. How are things elsewhere?"

"Non-combatants are currently evacuating to the main hall. Everyone capable of fighting is defending. So far, Crown Prince and the Queen are safe, but..."

“That’s a relief. But what about the ‘but’?”

“Yes, Princess Tires is currently missing.”

“What? Have you initiated a search?”

“Yes, we have. However, the castle is in chaos, so please give us some time.”

“I see... Should I move to the main hall then?”

“No, it’s unclear where the enemy might be hiding on the way there. Let’s defend this place for now.”

“Alright. Everyone, I’m counting on you!”

“Yes!”

Tires, please stay safe

# Chapter 78 - The Maid

Today, we finally arrived at the capital of the border territory. Unusually, the Fairy Lord woke up earlier than me, thanks to the rustling sounds near my waist, which were the Fairy Lord's actions.

I greeted one of the female adventurers who had been on guard and was accompanying us on this expedition. The fact that two female adventurers were included in our party for this forced march was undoubtedly a consideration for both the Fairy Lord and me.

By the time the morning sun rose and illuminated the surroundings, the Guild Master of the adventurers signaled for me, and then made a hand sign towards the Fairy Lord. This sign, where he formed a square with both of his thumbs and index fingers, was a request for the Fairy Lord to produce a map.

While the people in the castle believed that the Fairy Lord could understand their words, it was likely that the Fairy Lord didn't comprehend spoken language. Some individual words seemed to be understood, but when it came to constructing sentences, there was no apparent understanding.

I've had experience before, attending to foreign dignitaries who had attendants who couldn't understand our language.

The Fairy Lord's reactions resembled those of those attendants.

Gestures and hand signs worked for communication, so it wasn't an issue of intelligence. In fact, the Fairy Lord's actions indicated a high level of intelligence. So, I once tried to teach the Fairy Lord our language, but the Fairy Lord escaped...

Upon the Guild Master's request, the Fairy Lord moved away from me and produced the map. The green, semi-transparent three-dimensional map never ceased to amaze me, no matter how many times I saw it. It looked almost like the real thing once color was added.

“Oh, are those dots gathering? Is this our current location?”

“Yes, that seems right. Why, should we head straight that way?”

We had been proceeding directly to our destination, bypassing the main road. This was based on Lord Zanten’s suggestion that traveling in a straight line would be much faster than following the winding road. However, since we were traversing a grassy plain, it wasn’t much of a challenge.

“Hey, maid. Can you help with breakfast?”

One of the adventurers called me over. Since the Guild Master was still busy examining the map, I would be temporarily separated from the Fairy Lord. It had been like this before. Although I had been nervous when the Fairy Lord suddenly leaped out of the carriage on the first day, since then, the Fairy Lord had been very considerate of us.

“Hey, first, take off that necklace.”

...?

I was brought to a remote location and surrounded by five adventurers. I had heard that many adventurers were rough individuals, but I shouldn’t have followed such people carelessly. In the seven days we had been together, nothing like this had ever happened. It was quite unexpected on the last day.

“What’s the matter? Take it off quickly.”

“I refuse.”

This necklace was a precious gift from the Fairy Lord. I couldn’t simply hand it over to these people. Besides, I didn’t let anyone touch this necklace, even if it weren’t for that.

“Then die!”

With those words, the man suddenly drew his sword and lunged at me! Naturally, I couldn't react in time and had to close my eyes!

“Ahh!”

“Ugh!?”

It seemed like he aimed for my neck, and I received a strong impact to the neck and fell over. At the same time, the attacker also stopped moving. It appeared that the sword had hit the Fairy Lord's necklace. This necklace was said to cause numbness when touched by others.

“Press him down! Don't give him a chance to cast spells!”

“Kill her!”

Three more rushed towards me. One had a bow ready. Another was still affected by numbness, but there was no time to start chanting spells. In that case, how about this!?

“Ugh!”

“It's too bright!”

“My eyes!”

I activated a life magic spell without incantation. Using the power of the Fairy Lord's necklace, I cast a high-intensity illumination spell. Even though I had my eyes closed when I activated it, the light overflowed through my eyelids. Those men who had seen it directly would have impaired vision for some time.

“I, Siluela, call upon... Fire, pierce through my enemies!”

Zudon!

“...Ugh!”

The archer was reduced to only his legs. Simultaneously, I managed to stand up. I had been taught by the Head Magician that if possible, I should take out ranged attackers first.

“Damn it!”

“You amateur!”

The men, realizing that the archer had been defeated, rushed towards me, swinging their swords recklessly.

“I, Siluela, call upon...”

“You won’t get the chance!”

“Ugh!”

My left arm was cut. It seemed my vision hadn’t fully recovered yet, but it wasn’t a fatal wound. However, my left arm was now practically useless, and I had no chance to chant spells.

The remaining men approached me cautiously, one of them holding his hand up in front of his face. Ah, did he ask me to remove the necklace earlier? Well, let’s grant his wish!

I took off the Fairy Lord’s necklace, held it by the edge, and swung my arm. As the necklace touched the sword, it deflected the blade.

“I, Siluela, call upon... Fire, pierce through my enemies!”

Zudon!

The man who had just lost his chest, along with his head and arms, collapsed, and his legs rolled away.

“What? Did you shorten your incantation?”

“No, I just didn’t stop chanting.”

“I, Siluela, call upon...”

“Don’t get cocky!”

A little more time, just a little more, and we could have won. But I had no chance to continue chanting. So, I reluctantly threw the Fairy Lord’s necklace at the opponent.

Bachin!

“Ugh!”

Bachibachibachibachi!

The necklace fell onto the fallen man and continued to bounce off him. His body flopped around like a fish pulled out of a river.

“You damn amateur!”

It was all over; there was no way out. I turned my back and crouched down. Then, I felt something coming out from my waist...

“What? A frog?”

I couldn’t quite understand, but for some reason, the man staggered and stopped moving.

“I, Siluela, have won. It took too much time.”

“What do you mean...”

Immediately after that, two thick beams of light, taller than a person, burst out...

“Huh?”

“Huh?”

The remaining two men were eradicated. Simultaneously, I was enveloped in another gentle light, and my injuries began to heal. This was my first time witnessing the Fairy Lord’s magic, and it was of tremendous power...

The Fairy Lord flew over to me. In the distance, I could see the adventurers running towards us.

Phew, all that’s left now is to get information from this man.

I watched as the man, still bouncing around like a fish, continued to struggle.



## Chapter 79 - Escape

Uh-oh, this is bad, really bad! Those guys failed to eliminate the maids!

Now it's going to be much more challenging to move freely. Those red and blue dots on the Fairy's map, they undoubtedly represent people from the kingdom and the empire. Occasionally, we've encountered monsters too, and I assume they're indicated by the red dots. But once those guys failed to get rid of the maids, it's only a matter of time before they figure out that the red dots represent hostile forces. I could have managed if they all died, but having one of them survive...

Well, let's be honest, I've done my best to keep them distracted until now. We'll reach the border town by today, and by then, a few lies won't matter. I can explain the early departure and the fact that we're down to five instead of six as no big deal.

We've even managed to divert from the main road, which is probably blocked by empire-sponsored bandits by now.

The letter from the border count about a supposed stampede in the borderlands was a fake. So, we needed to eliminate any letters confirming that or any real news from the borderlands. We had to switch them out with fake information. It's challenging to maintain such an extensive misinformation campaign.

Hmm, it's a shame. I had even brought the remains of a disposable magical device that summons a mage. The closer we get to the border town, the higher the risk of encountering someone who knows there wasn't a stampede. If they testify that there was no stampede, I planned to sneak in this magical device and claim that person was an empire spy. But now, it's all gone to waste. That fairy really... using such a devastating attack spell, it's enough to make you sick.

It's time to make a move. Maybe I should head back to the empire. Luckily, I have a magical item that can make me invisible. For now,

all their attention is on the maids, so slipping away won't be a problem. I'll contact the bandits and have them disrupt those guys' return. With the fairy on their side, when they get back, the capital will be in ruins! It feels good to think about.

Thanks for your help, Guild Master. I don't think we'll meet again, but you've been quite useful. Goodbye!

## **Chapter 80 - I Won't Let You Escape**

I've been traveling in this carriage for days now, and I'm getting really bored. I need some entertainment to pass the time!

Feeling starved for amusement, I decided to play a little prank in the early morning while the Birdcage Maid was still asleep. I attached a toy frog to the ribbon on her waist. The trick was to make it jump out when she bent over.

The Birdcage Maid always had impeccable posture. Her back was unnaturally straight, even when sitting. I wondered if she even had joints in her spine. However, there were moments when she had to bend over, like when preparing meals. In this world, where magic exists, we often heated soup in a pot even during carriage travel. The Birdcage Maid would lean forward then, usually with a female adventurer standing behind her.

So, what would happen if, during one of these moments, a toy frog unexpectedly jumped out from her back? The female adventurer would surely burst into laughter! But the Birdcage Maid was of noble birth, and it wouldn't be appropriate for commoner adventurers to laugh at her. Or maybe it would be allowed, but let's assume it wouldn't be.

In that case, what would happen? An unsuspecting Birdcage Maid and a female adventurer who absolutely must not laugh! Sounds amusing! It's a go.

As the morning sun rose and I anticipated the preparation of breakfast, I wondered if the muscular fellow wanted to show me something. At first, I thought it was a photo opportunity, but I

realized that this world probably didn't have cameras.

At least, I'd never seen one. So, if it wasn't a photo opportunity, what could it be? It was a rectangle, and something I had done to the muscular guy. I decided to try showing the map, and it seemed that was it.

Here's the map. While the muscular guy and the other adventurer were engrossed in studying the map, the Birdcage Maid and the other adventurers went to prepare breakfast. Ah, I'll miss the hilarious frog surprise if they take too long! The female adventurer called over another woman, and they seemed to be having an extended conversation. Is this going to take a while?

I kept my eyes on the Birdcage Maid's location using the map, so I could go there as soon as the muscular guys finished looking at it. After a while, though... wait, what? One of the red dots disappeared? What does that mean? Did someone die? Seriously?

Oh no, I'm getting nervous. As I kept watching, the female adventurer maneuvered herself to block the view of the Birdcage Maid's party. Hey, can't you see you're in the way? Don't you realize? It looks like the muscular guys are more focused on their direction. Oh, the red dot disappeared again.

This is bad; there's no time to think! When I flew over to where the Birdcage Maid was, the adventurers had drawn their swords, and they were about to attack her! Why? And the Birdcage Maid was crouched down, and the toy frog jumped out!

No, no, no, I didn't want a last-minute surprise like this! I used my attack magic on impulse. Then a massive laser shot out! Whoa, did that really come out? Did I...kill someone? Did I really take a life? Whoa!

Wait, I just noticed, there's a guy twitching over there. Gross. Oh, is that Mr. Back-Alley Man? The others who had chased after him restrained him. His twitching stopped, and he was just a regular Back-Alley Man again.

Then, the Birdcage Maid picked up a necklace that had fallen from him and put it on. It's the one I gave her! She kept it all this time; that's wonderful.

Wait a second, could it be? Did these guys try to steal the necklace I gave the Birdcage Maid? Ah, they always had an air of malice around them, didn't they? So, they were thieves. That makes sense.

Hmm, speaking of malice, there's one more person. The female adventurer. Should I eliminate her as well? No, no, wait, hold on.

Because of this incident, my emotions are running high, and I'm teetering on the edge of the dark side. Almost everyone I encountered when I first went to the castle and when I visited the adventurer's guild for the first time had some kind of malice about them.

So, displaying something like malice equals labeling them as a bad person might not be the right way to go. If it were, then almost everyone from the castle and the adventurers would be considered bad people.

More importantly, it's the Birdcage Maid. Leaving a woman alone like this in a medieval-like world was a bad idea. I guess I hadn't completely shaken off my Japanese sensibilities. At the very least, until I return, I can't let her out of my sight!

I squeezed into the pocket of the Birdcage Maid's apron dress. I'm not letting her out of my sight until we get back!

That's what I thought, but this place isn't working! It's swaying! With every swish of her skirt, I feel like I'm going to throw up! Um, there must be a better place... I wedged myself between the Birdcage Maid's chest and her apron dress.

Yep, that's a perfect fit!

Oh, wait, where did the female adventurer go? She's gone? I took out the map once more. Hey, hey, she moved way far away! She's practically running away! Suspicious, she's definitely suspicious!

I won't let her escape.

# Chapter 81 - Capture

BOOM!

Ugh... Ugh... Seriously, that fairy is going way overboard with these magical attacks! A massive beam of light just passed right by me. Come on, I was so close to getting out of the map's range.

BOOM!

Is she purposely not hitting me? Is she thinking that if she kills me, she won't be able to extract information? If that's the case, her shots are all over the place. Maybe she can't see me, so she's just shooting in my general direction based on the map?

Even though I'm running low to the ground, the height at which the light passes by assumes that an adult male is standing upright. If I'm quick to react and drop to the ground every time she shoots, I might be able to escape somehow.

There should be a small forest ahead. Naturally, there would be monsters there too. Those red dots on the map also represented monsters. So, if I can make it to the forest, I could potentially blend in with the monsters and confuse my pursuers.

And...!

BOOM!

Ugh, if I get hit, it's instant death. Even a graze could be a fatal blow. But, well, if I don't get hit, it's all pointless, isn't it?

Her aim is too high... isn't it?

BOOM!

Ugh! With each shot, I'm being rolled around like a dice. But, well, I've reached the forest! I win... I thought, but then...

there was a fairy right in front of me. I froze in shock.

Wait, did this fairy shoot magic from behind...? No way. I turned around, and it turned out that it was the maid who was firing the magic. Could that maid really have such a long range? I didn't ask for this, seriously! Moreover, this fairy, she can see me!?

"Zanten! What's wrong? Why are you running away?"

Is that the guildmaster? Oh no, I'm surrounded. I got too distracted by what was happening behind me. So, that maid kept firing magic not to finish me off but to make sure I didn't realize they were flanking me? But I should still be invisible, right?

"Capture him! Don't let him escape!"

"I know!"

"But Guildmaster, I can't see him! Are you sure he's here?"

The noose was tightening. The adventurers were cautious, but... maybe they weren't used to fighting. The maid, however, approached me carelessly. For this fairy, it seems like this maid was special in some way. If I could take her as a hostage, there might still be a chance, right?

"Hyah!"

"Hey, don't move! Ugh?"

"Pyah!"

I thought I could do it, but the fairy splashed mud on me. Both I and the maid were now covered in mud, completely exposed.

“I found him!”

“Was he really invisible?”

“Hey, Zanten, stop resisting!”

“No, wait, I still...”

Before I could finish my sentence, a beam of light from the fairy struck me. Feeling an unusual sensation on my arm, I involuntarily released the maid. What? My right arm was missing...? This is... it's over.

“Wait, wait, I surrender. I surrender.”

I deactivated the invisibility enchantment and raised both my hands in surrender. Immediately after, the fairy blasted my raised arm away! Is she insane!?

In desperation, I pressed my hand against the wound. Wait, my hand? I still had both of them. I looked at my hands in bewilderment, and in the next moment, the fairy blasted my arm away again!

Come on, seriously, this is madness! She looked again, and both hands were seemingly missing, only to be blown away the next moment...

“Sto... Stop it! I surrender! I'll tell you everything!”

Ugh, this fairy tilted her head! Is she pretending not to understand me now? Dealing with someone like this was a big mistake. What popularity in the city, what cute little fairy? She's a demon, isn't she?

“Ah, Fairy Lady, that's enough. —Hey, capture him.”



Afterward, I was captured and brought back to the carriage. I noticed Nos was rolled up like a sushi roll, but she seemed to be the only one who survived. She's unconscious, but there don't seem to be any major injuries.

"So, why did you run?"

"Well, who knows, really."

The guildmaster and four adventurers, along with the maid and the fairy, began their interrogation.

"This guy doesn't seem to have any remorse at all. How about I cut his arm off again?"

"Yeah, let's do that. If the fairy can grow it back, we can keep slashing."

"Ugh... you guys are all crazy. Well, even if you caught me, your loss is already guaranteed."

"Why a stampede in the borderlands? The real stampede happens in the capital, right? Are you connected to the Empire?"

"Ahaha! You're just realizing that now? It's ridiculous!"

It must have been six years or so, and no one noticed. It's more than ridiculous.

"Damn it!"

"Gu... hahaha, stop it! Don't get that fairy any closer to me! Please, stop!"

The fairy flew in front of me. She's a really dangerous one. My body started trembling. My attached arm was throbbing.

Can she really take over the kingdom by just dragging me here with those massive magic attacks? No matter how many Imperial soldiers there are, they won't stand a chance against that kind of magic.

"Hey, he's suddenly quiet. Are you scared of the fairy, Zanten?"

"Oh, stop it, stop it!"

"Ahahaha!"

"Listen, we don't have time to play around. We need to decide what to do next."

"Right, should we hurry back to the capital?"

"No, I think I should go to the border city as planned. I'll report the situation there and request assistance from the Border Earl's forces."

"That makes sense. But what about this fairy? Even one like her could turn the tide. It'll take a while to explain the situation, convince the Border Earl, and prepare the troops."

"Oh, yeah. So, what if we split into two groups? One group takes the fairy back to the capital, and the other group goes to summon the Border Earl's forces."

"Alright, let's go with that plan. But, Zanten, we've known each other for a long time, and it's truly disappointing. We've relied on you countless times... but borders don't matter to adventurers. So, going to the Empire is no problem at all.

However, assisting in a coup is a serious crime. You know that, right?"

"I do know... that."

Ah... how did it come to this? Even if the Imperial Army successfully occupies the royal capital, wouldn't everything be taken back with just one small fairy charging in? When did the plan go so wrong? No, it's been wrong from the moment this damn fairy showed up.

## Chapter 82 - Fairy Sword

“Oh, you came out surprisingly quickly,”

When we burst out of the treasure vault, what we saw were anti-magic shields blocking the corridor and my personal maid lying beside it.

“She’s... dead...? Why?”

“Calm down, Your Highness!”

“It’s best not to look too closely.”

“Did you... kill her?”

Certainly, I had noticed that the high-pitched laughter had stopped, but I never expected to see her dead. She had led the enemy soldiers into the castle, and in the end, she couldn’t escape the death penalty for aiding foreign invaders, but still, seeing someone I knew die right in front of me was unsettling.

She had been taking care of me for some time, even though she was an enemy. I had seen the bodies of bandits and such before, but I never thought it would be this nauseating. It was fortunate that I hadn’t had breakfast; otherwise, my breakfast might have ended up on the floor as soup.

“Why, you ask? Because she served her purpose. Her role was to get us into the castle and find out the way up. We don’t need her anymore.”

I see, so she had only been pretending to be a princess and was manipulated by the Empire. If we stayed here, we would also end up being manipulated. We needed to move.

“Does that fairy sword work against anti-magic shields?”

“I don’t know, but it’s worth a try. Hey, the one with the brown shield, draw their attention.”

“Understood.”

One of the guards swung the brown sword, and stone rubble flew through the air. Just by swinging the sword, it had the same effect as an offensive spell! The Imperial soldiers who were hit by the stone rubble staggered, and another guard took advantage of the opportunity to unleash a wind blade!

“What? What kind of sword is that? We had no information about that! Stop... ugh!”

“Ugh...”

“Ugh...”

Amazing. The enemy disintegrated in an instant. The anti-magic shield seemed to dampen the magical power, but when solid objects were mixed in, it absorbed the impact as is. The wind blade was deflected, but when it hit the stone rubble, it caused a chain reaction. The two guards immediately realized the coordination between them and executed it flawlessly.

“You! How dare you do this!”

“You killed us first, and now you complain about retaliation? We won’t let someone with your level of commitment take this country. Annihilate them!”

“Yes!”

“Roger!”

I had also sworn to protect this country. I couldn't protect it directly with my own power, but I couldn't afford to stand still here. We had to get to the surface quickly and inform them of the enemy attack.

"It seems there's only one causing havoc, but there were supposed to be two Fairy Lady Dolls, one in the Fairy Lady's room and the other in Mother's room. The one causing trouble now looks beaten up, so the other one might have been defeated already. But why is the Doll moving and causing explosions?"

The head of the Fairy Lady Doll was struck by an Imperial soldier's sword, but it didn't break. However, it wasn't an actual head; there were no humans with green hair to replicate the Fairy Lady's beautiful green locks. Therefore, Mother proudly told me that the Fairy Lady Doll's head was made from the fur of trolls, a magical creature known for its high durability. Floating in the air and swaying unstably, the combination of the high defense fur and its unstable appearance meant that it couldn't be easily damaged with just a few sword strikes.

No, I couldn't afford to stand here foolishly watching.

"Eradicate that group."

"Yes!"

The guards sent out blades of wind and water, cutting through the Imperial soldiers. Two or three strikes each, they followed up with additional attacks, and a triumphant cheer rose when they were almost all wiped out. I see, they had been hiding and surrounding the enemy.

"What's the situation?"

When I asked, one of the hidden guards came out and reported.

"Well, non-combatants have already evacuated to the First Hall. Queen Mother and His Highness the Crown Prince are safe. The combatants are defending the hall, but the enemy has been almost

entirely wiped out by these people. However, some of the enemy are heading towards His Majesty the King.”

“Is His Majesty safe?”

“I’m not sure.”

Damn, if His Majesty were to be killed, it would be a blow even if others were safe. We couldn’t afford to show a moment of vulnerability to the Empire, which could take advantage of a change in leadership.

“We must hurry to His Majesty!”

With only three Fairy Swords left, I considered distributing them to the soldiers, but it was top-secret information, so there was a high chance they wouldn’t even know of their existence. To wield such a powerful sword effectively, they would need explanations. But right now, we had no time for that. I left with only the palace guards who had been with me and headed to His Majesty’s office.

“Your Majesty! Are you safe!?”

“Oh? Tires, are you safe?”

Unlike me, who was in a state of panic, His Majesty answered quite casually. I felt a wave of relief. I collapsed onto the floor, feeling like the tension had been released.

Thus, the unprecedented attack on the royal castle came to an end. However, our troubles were far from over.

—After this, we would be in a state of confusion, desperately trying to stop the rampaging Fairy Lady Doll.

## Chapter 83 - Dignity

“Amazing! He’s a true hero.” As the Stampede surged into the capital, we managed to hold our own for now, thanks to the efforts of Duster and the head of the Mage Corps.

“Nzooooaahh!”

Bam!

While many adventurers, including the Guild Master, were away dealing with the Stampede on the border, I, as the Acting Guild Master, was supposed to handle normal duties. I never expected that a Stampede would occur here as well, forcing us to deal with it with a limited staff. However, there was a glimmer of hope thanks to the Fairy Lady’s guidance, and it was clear that Duster possessed extraordinary abilities.

“Nurabooooaahh!”

Bam!

We managed to handle the situation quite well until now, with the Stampede being reduced to about a quarter of its original size. However, the Orc King was still a formidable foe, and it seemed that the head of the Mage Corps was doing fine.

I wanted to check on Duster’s situation, but he was on the front lines, making it difficult to get close or communicate with him. There was no one available to go and confirm his status.

“Huff...”

Gulp, gulp...

“Now, Acting Guild Master.”



“What is it?”

The head of the Mage Corps spoke to me while drinking a mana recovery potion. This was the first time he had approached me like this since the battle had settled into its current state. I wondered what was on his mind.

“I’m feeling a bit, well, you know...”

“...How long can you hold it?”

“...I’d really like to rush to the restroom...”

“...Is it the small one?”

“...No, the big one.”

“Why didn’t you say something sooner? A little earlier, please! It’s coming!”

“Uh... How...gaaahhh!”

Bam!

“Oh, no...”

“Guard! Guard!”

This was a dire situation that I hadn’t anticipated.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s an emergency! Bring a chamber pot now!”

“Huh?”

“Hurry! The future of the capital depends on your chamber pot! It’s coming!”

“Wha...? Understood!”

“I refuse! This is outrageous! I’ve never heard of such inhumane orders even on the battlefield!”

“I understand your sentiments. However, this is a battlefield as well. What should be prioritized, your dignity or the lives of the people of the capital? Look, it’s happening again!”

“You scoundrel! Nggghhh!”

Bam!

“Ahh!”

“...”

“Acting Guild Master! I’ve brought it!”

“Excellent! Set it up under the Mage Corps’ head! And you, line up with your backs to the head of the Mage Corps! You will be the shield protecting his dignity!”

“...Got it!”

“Alright, let’s go...”

“Uh... okay, here we go... ugh... huuhh...”

“Quickly, Mage Corps head! Cast your spell!”

“Which one?”

“Magic, please! The next one is coming!”

“Just a moment! Can’t you... alright, there... huff... huurghh...”

Bam! \*Plop\*

Phew, this should hold for the time being. The resolution of all our problems now rests on Duster defeating the Orc King.

We can’t afford to complain about a little smell at this point.

“I’m gonna breaaaaaaaak!”

Boom!

Finally, Duster engaged in combat with the Orc King. However, an unexpected event occurred once again. Well, perhaps I should have expected this. When Duster launched an attack on the King, his sword shattered into pieces!

“Oh no!”

“Hey, this is bad, isn’t it?”

This is a critical situation. Panic spread throughout our ranks. If we’re not careful, it will lead to a drop in morale.

Fortunately, Duster was unharmed, evading the King’s attacks, but...

“Huuungh!”

Boom!

Is there anything we can do to help? General is still available. If only we could provide Duster with another weapon, but ordinary weapons won't suffice. Even the General couldn't penetrate the King's defenses when wielded by anyone other than Duster. We can expect the King to be even tougher. Until now, we've been relying on the Fairy Lady's preparations...

"Laanzoooooooo!"

Boom!

The Fairy Lady? Perhaps she left something else behind. Something... something... If only there were a highly sharp weapon available. No, it can't be? If everything the Fairy Lady did had a purpose...

"Mage Corps Head, change your magic use from elimination to distraction! Focus on immobilizing the General! Everyone else, start engaging the remaining High Orcs! Follow the plan we discussed earlier—five or more people per High Orc!

I'll be stepping away for a moment."

"Understood!"

"Hurry, hurry! It should be in the Guild Master's room. I'd love to send someone fast to retrieve it, but even in an emergency, I can't allow outsiders to rummage through the Guild Master's room."

...Please, let it be in time!

## Chapter 84 - Oak King

Finally, the Orc King—defeating this one would mean the Stampede is almost over. Maybe that's why I let my guard down. In my very first attack on the Orc King, my iron sword shattered!

It may have been just an ordinary iron sword, but I had used it for quite a while, having received it from my senior adventurer. There's a certain sentimental attachment to it. However, now isn't the time to get sentimental. If I relax, I'll end up dead.

The giant creature, nearly twice my height, swung a club horizontally with its right arm. When dealing with humanoid opponents, the trick is to move in the opposite direction of the swing. This naturally positions you behind your opponent, making it easier to strike. Also, those who use self-taught swordsmanship or martial arts tend to leave their sides

vulnerable after a horizontal swing. This Orc King was no exception; its side was open after a horizontal swing. However, I lacked any means of attack now.

Unlike the other orcs, the Orc King's attacks were surprisingly accurate. In fact, they were so accurate that they were easy to dodge. Its telegraphed movements made it easy to anticipate its aim. If only I had some means of attack...

I noticed a change in the surroundings. The front-line fighters had begun eliminating normal orcs and high orcs, and the magical attacks that had been unleashed to reduce their numbers were now focused on keeping the Orc General, who had fewer reinforcements, at bay. Perhaps this shift was due to the fact that I had become engaged in a one-on-one battle with the Orc King, making it difficult for the front-line fighters to deal with the General.

"Hey, you there, Duster! A delivery from the Sub-Master!"

I turned to see a small wooden box being thrown. It seemed

deliberately aimed a little further away to account for the Orc King's attack range. I bent down, sweeping the ground with my hand while throwing sand into the Orc King's eyes, then rushed toward the wooden box.

Opening it, I found a tiny, tiny sword inside, securely fastened with its hilt to avoid touching the blade.

—Is this the sword the fairy was using when she was eating meat?

“Use it to cut the tendons in the Orc King's legs and immobilize him! Can you do it?”

A Royal Guard passed on the Sub-Master's request. This tiny sword, while having a blade barely the size of my index finger, had a remarkably sharp edge, as Zanten had mentioned. If the blade could get through, it might be able to cut the tendons in the Orc King's legs.

“Yeah, it's absolutely no problem...”

“Alright, I'm counting on you! They say we'll finish it off with arrows once it's immobilized!”

“Arrows? Will they pierce it?”

“I don't know, but the plan is to use the fairy's spear as the arrowhead!”

“I see, in that case, it'll be just fine!”

I grasped the tiny sword with my index finger and thumb. I had to be careful due to its small size. But there was no room for sentimentality now. I couldn't afford to relax; my life depended on this.

The Orc King was a power type. It put too much weight on its supporting leg to effectively put power into its attacks. The other leg,

not the supporting one, tended to move away from it. By widening its stance and shifting its weight quickly, it compensated for its slow movements.

The key was the overhead swing. Its entire weight rested on the supporting leg during this move, making it highly vulnerable. Moreover, its non-supporting leg was exposed, almost unprotected.

Avoiding the horizontal swipe, the kick, and then... the club was swung upward! I observed the Orc King's movements closely, and when it swung downward with its right arm, all its weight on the supporting leg, I rotated around the left leg.

I sliced through the tendon of its left leg while dodging the downward swing. The blade's sharpness was incredible; I felt no resistance!

With the tendon in the supporting leg severed, the Orc King's balance was disrupted, and it began to fall. A single arrow swiftly flew and pierced the Orc King's forehead.

Thunk!

“Uooh!”

“We did it!”

“Yay!”

Cheers erupted from all around. It was over.

“Well done, hero! I'll lend you my backup sword. I'll handle the elimination of the General.”

“Understood. Let's finish this quickly.”

The Royal Guard handed me the thrown sword, and I put the absurdly sharp little sword back in its wooden box.

And so, with me dealing with the General and the other front-line fighters eliminating the orcs and high orcs, the Stampede in the Royal Capital came to an end.



## Chapter 85 - Delicacy

I was listening to the cheers that erupted throughout the town in response to the news of the Stampede's resolution from the shelter I had set up at the church. I had been handling the reception of evacuees at the shelter in my role as a staff member of the Adventurer's Guild, but now that was over.

"It's such a relief, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed."

An elderly gentleman from the church joined me in celebrating. It seemed that the church was currently divided between those who supported the fairies and those who rejected them. If they found out that the fairies played a crucial role in resolving the Stampede, it might shift the balance of power among these factions.

"Now, I'll handle the rest, so please continue with the work that only you, as a staff member of the Adventurer's Guild, can do. Oh, it looks like your ride is here."

"Ride?"

I looked toward the entrance pointed out by the elderly gentleman and saw the Sub-Master and Duster entering.

"Ah, Miss Risty. Well done."

"Thank you. Did you manage to defeat all the monsters, including the Orc King?"

"Yes, Orc King, Orc Generals, and other powerful monsters were all defeated by Duster here."

"What!? Duster was supposed to be the surveillance officer overseeing

the entire operation, right? Did he actually fight?

And he defeated all of them?”

This was different from what I had heard! According to the plan, the Royal Capital’s Chief Magician was supposed to use magic to eliminate the monsters of the Stampede, while the front-line fighters were tasked with defeating any that slipped through. Wasn’t Duster supposed to be the one confirming the presence of missed enemies? Why was he fighting, and why did he defeat all of them?

“Hey, is that story true? Did that guy defeat all the Stampede monsters by himself!?”

“Is that true? Then that guy’s a hero!”

“Oh, stop it...”

A crowd had gathered, and Duster was getting mobbed.

“Wait a minute, Sub-Master! This is getting out of hand!”

“This is a bit troublesome. Let’s leave quickly. Duster, let’s go! Miss Risty, too.”

“Huh? Where are we going?”

“To the castle.”

“Huh?”

Why did we need to go to the castle? Wasn’t it just for reporting the completion? But then, wasn’t I unnecessary for that?

“Well then, thank you. Goodbye, Grandpa!”

“Thank you very much! Goodbye, Grandpa!”

As I followed the Sub-Master onto the carriage, I noticed that Duster was already in the carriage, having somehow escaped the crowd. The somewhat disheartened Chief Magician was seated beside him.

“Chief Magician, thank you for your hard work.”

“Yeah, you too.”

“Why do you look so disheartened?”

“Well... let me just say this. People have a dignity they want to protect.”

“Huh?”

“Risty, everyone has things they want to keep to themselves.”

“Hmm?”

I wondered what had happened. If Duster really had defeated all the monsters as the story was going, maybe the Chief Magician couldn't showcase his skills? Was that why he looked disheartened? So, did Duster actually defeat all the monsters by himself? That's incredible!

“Duster, Duster, if it's true that you defeated all the Stampede monsters by yourself, how did that happen?”

“Well... it's not exactly like that.”

“Huh? I'm not sure I understand.”

“We'll explain the situation at the castle. Let's head there first.”

The Sub-Master interrupted the conversation and suggested that we continue the discussion at the castle. With a smile on his face, the Sub-Master, the Chief Magician looking a bit disheartened, and Duster, as usual, were all in the carriage. I also noticed Royal Guards standing around the carriage.

“Um, do I need to go too? I don’t really want to,” I asked.

“What are you saying? In my absence, you were in the front lines. You’re an important figure as well,” replied the SubMaster.

“Really?”

Well, it couldn’t be helped. It seemed I had to go. But I figured it would be just a simple report, and since I wasn’t at the scene, I could take it easy. It was definitely better than getting kidnapped by fairies like last time.

As we reached the castle gate, I could sense that something was amiss inside.

“Be careful! It seems to have gone that way! Don’t let it out!”

Someone was shouting in the distance. They seemed to be chasing after something. Wait, was there an intruder in the castle? This was getting dangerous.

As the Sub-Master and the others got off the carriage, I prepared to do the same. I would be the last one to disembark since I was to be escorted.

“What’s going on? What happened?” the Sub-Master asked the gatekeeper.

Instead of a reply, there was a sudden explosion.

Kaboom!

“Whoa!”

“What was that!?”

“Eek!”

“Hyaa!”

“Hiiiin!”

“Watch out! They went that way! Don’t let them outside!”

Another explosion! It was fairies again! Tattered fairies were chasing after us. What kind of fairies were these? Fairies were supposed to be cute and harmless, right?

Thunk!

“Are you okay?” Duster asked.

“D-D-Duster-san!”

Duster had come to our rescue. Thank goodness!

“Don’t worry, everything will be fine,” he assured us.

Wow, he was dependable! He didn’t seem like the usual drunken guy you’d find at a bar. Finally, the carriage came to a stop, but the battered fairies were still pursuing us.

“Well done! You, the adventurer! Capture that doll!” someone shouted.

“Huh?”

“Be careful! If there’s no one within a certain range, it turns invisible. But if someone is nearby, it explodes!”

What!? What kind of evil design was that? To capture it, you had to make sure it was invisible, but if you got too close, it exploded? Were these dolls made by those crazy fairies? Was this all part of their plan, Sub-Master!?

Kaboom!

“Hiiiiin!”

“How’s it going?”

“Duster-dono!”

Another explosion! It was the fairies again! Those ragged fairies were still chasing us!

“You did great! Duster, there’s a source of magic around the doll’s chest area! It must be a magic stone or something! If you capture the doll and remove the source of magic, it should stop!”

“Got it! Leave it to me!”

Following the Chief Magician’s suggestion, Duster quickly captured the silly doll. He was fast! I didn’t know Duster could move that quickly. He was incredibly cool!

“Duster-san!”

“Hmm... Are you okay?”

“Y-Yes.”

I couldn't help but cling to Duster.

“Uh, um...”

“What's wrong?”

Could it be that he was blushing? Hehe...

“My nose is running, and there's drool...”

# Chapter 86 - Crown Prince

“Does that mean everything went according to the Fairy Lord’s plan?”  
I asked.

Listening to the Sub-Master of the Adventurer’s Guild recount the events of the Stampede, I couldn’t help but marvel at the meticulousness of the Fairy Lord’s actions and their results.

The intrusion of the Imperial soldiers into the castle had been resolved just before the representative of the Adventurer’s Guild arrived at the castle. However, at the moment, there were ongoing investigations into the intrusion route and who might have been the inside collaborator.

That’s why, as the Crown Prince, I, who had relatively little involvement in the Imperial soldier’s intrusion, was tasked with handling the Adventurer’s Guild’s matters.

His Majesty the King, the Prime Minister, and Her Majesty the Queen had directly engaged the Imperial soldiers in battle, with the Queen being the first to sense the attack and issue high alert orders. As for Princess Tires, she had witnessed the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion from the moment they entered the castle, thanks to her personal maid being the inside collaborator.

Furthermore, Tires had taken the liberty of removing the Fairy Sword from the treasure vault. While she was of royal blood, an underage princess making unilateral decisions regarding the contents of the treasury would surely lead to

repercussions from the nobles. Given her significant contribution to defeating the Imperial soldiers, it might be possible to mitigate the situation with a light reprimand, but...

“That’s right, Your Highness. And here are the swords and spears used to defeat the Orc King,” the Sub-Master said, pulling out a wooden box about the length of one’s forearm from the table. When he opened



it, there were small swords and spears neatly arranged inside. The Adventurer's Guild receptionist, a young lady, couldn't contain her surprise.

"They're so tiny! Um, Duster-san, did you really use these small weapons to defeat the Orc King?"

"Yes."

"Risty-san, this is in front of His Highness, you know."

"Ah... I apologize."

It was a bit noisy, but I could understand their excitement. After all, the blades of the swords were only about the length of a finger, and the spears were no longer than the width of one's palm. Although I received an explanation, I still couldn't comprehend how they managed to defeat a formidable foe like the Orc King with these weapons.

However, what we needed to focus on now was not how they defeated it.

"It seems the Fairy Lord anticipated everything and prepared a solution in advance for the Stampede. In that case, why are these swords and spears, used to defeat the Orc King, so small?" I inquired.

"If the Fairy Lord had initially prepared human-sized weapons, we would likely have taken them out of the capital in preparation for the Stampede on the outskirts," the Sub-Master explained.

"I see."

"The Fairy Lord made the weapons small to ensure that we wouldn't realize their usefulness until the situation called for it."

"I understand. With such small weapons, nobody would have thought

to use them initially. It was only when we were in dire need against the Orc King that we remembered their existence.”

Listening to the Adventurer’s Guild’s report, I came to understand the reason for the swift containment of the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion into the castle. Could it be that the Fairy Lord had also anticipated the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion into the castle?

First, the reason for Her Majesty the Queen’s immediate suspicion of an enemy attack was the magical attack in the Fairy Lord’s room. However, subsequent investigations revealed that there was no damage in the Fairy Lord’s room, and there had been no explosions.

There was an explosion, but there was no damage. Ordinarily, one would find this absurd, but we had been forced to deal with this phenomenon until just a while ago. That’s right, the Fairy Lord Doll had been wandering around, emitting explosions and light. Despite the loud explosions, no actual damage had occurred.

Furthermore, the doll that had been displayed in the Fairy Lord’s room was confirmed to be missing. In other words, the initial explosion of that doll had led to the mistaken belief of an enemy attack by Her Majesty the Queen.

However, immediately afterward, there was a real enemy attack, and we were able to prepare for the assault without being caught off guard.

Moreover, the doll, while in a tattered state from the Imperial soldiers’ attacks, still used its explosions and light to distract the enemy. Thanks to that, we managed to defeat the Imperial soldiers without engaging in what could be considered a full-fledged battle...

Emitting explosions and light. In ordinary circumstances, no one would have thought of adding such a mechanism to a doll displayed in their own room.

Moreover, it was designed to explode when someone entered a certain range, and to disappear and become invisible when no one was within

that range, which suggested it was intended for combat.

Speaking of combat, the doll's hair was said to be made of troll fur. Would they really use expensive troll fur just to replicate the Fairy Lord's green hair? Cheaper green hair from ordinary magical creatures or animals would suffice, and they could have dyed it green.

Troll fur was known for its high defensive properties. So, was the material chosen with combat in mind? The one who had ordered the doll was Queen Mother, and this suggested that she too had anticipated the Imperial soldiers' intrusion.

If the doll had exploded before the enemy attack, who would have had the authority to unilaterally order heightened security? It would likely be His Majesty the King, Queen Mother, and perhaps me. However, would Queen Mother, who held such convenient authority, visit the Fairy Lord's room after the first doll's explosion? She probably knew about it from the start.

If she was indeed that competent, it made sense that the Empire would do anything to eliminate Queen Mother. Moreover, it was the Fairy Lord who saved Queen Mother from falling under the curse. Could it be that preparations for dealing with the Imperial soldiers' intrusion had started from that point?

No, it had to be earlier! The doll attracted the Imperial soldiers and, ultimately, the guards Tires brought with her were the ones who defeated them. This meant Tires had been given an important role in this incident.

However, if it weren't for the Fairy Lord, Tires would likely have been killed by bandits during the summer. The Fairy Lord had appeared before Tires during the bandit attack, but now, in hindsight, it seemed far from a coincidence.

And the Fairy Sword! Surely this wasn't something they would prepare without anticipating this attack. It became clear that the Fairy Lord had foreseen this incident and had prepared the Fairy Sword as a countermeasure.

Otherwise, there was no way a solution would just conveniently present itself to Tires when she happened to escape to the treasure vault.

If Tires' actions had been exactly as the Fairy Lord had anticipated, then she should be able to avoid punishment.

This was because taking the Fairy Sword from the treasure vault and using it to defeat the Imperial soldiers would align with the Fairy Lord's intentions. If Queen Mother also had her own plans in this matter, it wouldn't be seen as a unilateral decision.

How far had the Fairy Lord anticipated this incident? And it wasn't just the intrusion of the Imperial soldiers. The countermeasures for the simultaneous Stampede event were also perfect.

I had relatively little interaction with the Fairy Lord, so I likely didn't grasp the full extent of their plans. There must have been more preparatory measures that I was unaware of.

I needed to investigate further...

## Chapter 87 - Queen

“Is that so? Mother, you knew everything, didn’t you?”

According to my son, I had known about the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion since early summer. I had ordered the Fairy Lord Doll made from high-defense materials, used it to detect the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion, implemented strict security measures within the castle, and then placed the doll among the Imperial soldiers to create chaos.

Of course, none of this was true. In reality, if I had known about the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion from early summer, there would have been more conventional ways to handle it. Why would I come up with the idea of preparing combat-oriented Fairy Lord Dolls?

Nevertheless, when nobles like members of the royal family misunderstand things in their favor, it’s often best to go along with it. I smiled in silence.

“Indeed! You’re amazing, Mother.”

“Your Majesty... That’s incredible.”

My son, my daughter, and even the Prime Minister here were looking at me with eyes full of admiration. However, my husband wore a bitter expression. He might not fully accept it, but the situation had fit so perfectly that it was hard not to.

That was the expression on his face.

Still, while I had not foreseen the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion, it was clear that the Fairy Lord had. Otherwise, there would be no reason for them to prepare such eccentric dolls.

“My dear brother, if we assume that the Fairy Lord had a purpose behind all of their actions, could there have been a reason for the ‘blundered’ map display?”

The map display. During the initial report of the Stampede in the capital, the Fairy Lord had been present at the meeting with the adventurers. Even though the Adventurer's Guild had brought a map, the Fairy Lord had intentionally displayed their own.

The displayed map had detailed the underground structure of the royal castle, and it was from this map that the Duke's daughter, who had been collaborating with the invaders, had discovered the hidden door leading to the underground passage.

"Oh, yes. The Fairy Lord probably knew that there was a collaborator present. With that in mind, they might have intentionally displayed the map."

"Why?"

"Well, if the chambermaid couldn't find the hidden door, it would have made things more complicated. If she failed to open it, a large number of Imperial soldiers would have been trapped inside the secret passage. In that case, they would have had to come up with a different plan."

"I see, that makes sense. The Fairy Lord probably chose the future where 'enemy soldiers enter through the hidden door'

rather than 'an infinite number of possibilities.'"

"Exactly. The Fairy Lord's map probably only displayed the places they had been to. If it showed the underground passages, it means they had already explored them."

"I see... So, you mean to say that the 'blundered' actions were actually part of the plan, Mother?"

If these assumptions were true, the Fairy Lord's strategy was incredibly sophisticated. Of course, I had no knowledge of such events, but I smiled once again.

“As expected of you, Mother.”

“Hmm, then, Arland, the adventurers who displayed incredible feats during the Stampede mentioned that they had received fruits from the Fairy Lord in advance, correct?”

“Yes.”

In response to my husband’s question, my son gave a short answer. Those fruits, simply consumed, had enabled them to overwhelm the Stampede, which included the Oak King himself, with just their movements. The fruits were a bit dangerous, it seemed.

“In that case, does it mean that Your Majesty’s ability to cut down assassins and Imperial soldiers single-handedly was also thanks to the Fairy Lord? Your movements were beyond ordinary.”

The Prime Minister exclaimed in surprise at my husband’s statement. He had also partaken in those fruits, it seemed. But more importantly, it meant that the Fairy Lord had foreseen the attack on my husband.

“I also had some. Does that mean the Fairy Lord anticipated my actions as well? I thought those movements were far from ordinary.”

Tires’s question was valid. However, no one present could provide an answer.

“In any case, those fruits are dangerous. They were probably harvested from the sacred tree in the west wing. We should seal off the sacred area in the west wing and prohibit unauthorized access.”

I agreed with that opinion. Those fruits, which could turn someone into an unstoppable force, were extremely perilous.

There would undoubtedly be others seeking those fruits in the future.

“As for the sacred area, Father, it also contains spirit stones, correct? The source of power for those dolls used in the recent events was

spirit stones. So, could that sacred area have been part of the plan as well?”

“Yes, my son. According to the reports, the Fairy Lord voluntarily joined the advance party for Stampede preparedness in the borderlands, despite knowing about the Stampede in the capital and the attack on the royal castle. They ensured that even if they were absent from the capital, preparations were made. The Fairy Lord’s personal maid accompanied them as well.”

“Does that mean there might be something significant about this advance party? Something so crucial that even the Fairy Lord herself had to deal with it?”

“That’s right, my dear brother. When the Fairy Lord gifted the personal maid with that necklace made of spirit stones, she gained the ability to perform powerful magic. Could there have been some intent behind that necklace?”

“Hmm, it seems that way. It’s reported that the Fairy Lord decided to take part in the advance party herself, anticipating something so important that even her absence from the capital wouldn’t matter. And her personal maid accompanied her...”

“So?”

“There might be something significant about this advance party. Something that requires the Fairy Lord’s personal intervention...”

“We shouldn’t discuss this further here. Let’s head to confirm it immediately.”

I steered the conversation in that direction.

“Furthermore, we will not make any public announcements regarding the Fairy Lord’s actions. Especially not that the Imperial soldiers attacked the royal castle. We cannot let the citizens know. You all should avoid making definitive statements in public as well. However,



subtly hint at it to the nobles.”

Most of my son’s statements were based on assumptions, and being wrong later was not acceptable. Members of the royal family could not afford to make mistakes.

“That’s right, Arland. While we are dealing with our peers, we must avoid speaking too definitively. We may face consequences someday. The same goes for you, Tires.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“Yes.”

“Now, let’s move on to the future plans. First, we should seal off the sacred area in the west wing. And as Arland suggested, there will be no punishment for Tires. We’ll send the Second Knights to the north to apprehend Bastille, the collaborator. We’ll also identify any other collaborators within the castle and confirm the situation with the advance party.

Oh, there’s one more thing. Let’s return Tires’s personal maid, Niesha, to her.”

“Your Majesty, we must also consider rewards for those who participated in the capital Stampede preparations and for those who contributed to the defense of the royal castle.”

“Indeed, Prime Minister. Especially for the adventurers who displayed incredible feats during the Stampede and the leader of the Mage Guild who annihilated most of the Stampede. Also, the two guards who defeated most of the Imperial soldiers. However, there are limited resources we can allocate from the treasury. We’ll have to decide on rewards after the borderland Stampede is resolved.”

“Understood, Your Majesty.”

“Come to think of it, the Fairy Lord left the Fairy Sword in the

treasury. Perhaps it was also a gesture for rewards. Well, giving out Fairy Swords as rewards might be a bit too powerful...”

“Now, everyone, there’s something else I’d like to mention,”

As we were wrapping up the discussion with future plans laid out by my husband, it seemed that the Prime Minister had something else to add. He took out a bottle.

“It was found in the kitchen without anyone noticing. It appears to contain fruits from the sacred tree, but... if we assume that everything the Fairy Lord did had a purpose, could there be some significance to these bottled fruits?”

Everyone turned to look at me.

Of course, I just smiled.

## Chapter 88 - Crown

“Why is this happening!?! I can’t believe the attack failed!” I ran through the underground passage, clutching the wooden box.

“Wait!” It was Nyshe. I hadn’t anticipated her presence. I had infiltrated as the third member of the Magic Division, with only two others remaining in the capital, but now there was an unexpected fourth and an extraordinary fifth member, Siliera.

“I won’t wait!” I swung my staff with a short blade attached to the tip. It was a staff short enough to be held with both hands. It looked more like a long-hilted dagger than a staff. It was a clumsy choice for casting while running, and my aim was off, but it should serve as a distraction.

“Ahh! No incantation!?” Nyshe had brought a long standard staff, foolishly. It was too long to handle effectively in the underground passage. A novice mage with inappropriate equipment like hers was no match for an Imperial mage like me.

With this wooden box, I could still turn things around once it was delivered to the Empire. Inside was the real crown, not the fake replica the king usually wore but the genuine one from the treasury.

With this, I could bypass the official line of succession and blackmail the kingdom into making a specific person the king.

The blood of the Farsian royal family might be diluted, but it ran within the Empire as well. If the kingdom refused the demands, the kingdom, bound by archaic traditions, couldn’t hold a proper royal succession ceremony.

Unfortunately, the five Fairy Swords were left behind and couldn’t be taken. However, as long as I had this, it didn’t matter. Leaving the crown in the treasury and dragging all the treasury guards out of it was a foolish move, but I guess that’s what happens when you’re a

narrow-minded princess.

I exited the underground passage into the city. I would have preferred to leave directly from the city gates, but it seemed the road leading outside the city was blocked. Perhaps by a child? There were warning signs for children posted.

However, Nyshe wasn't pursuing me anymore. All that was left was for the message to reach the city gatekeepers before I left the city. I would have preferred to leave directly from the eastern gate, but I decided to exit from the west gate and bypass the northern side.

The west gate was already an easy target to begin with, and now, after the Stampede, the guards were less vigilant.

Witnesses might become more numerous, but I was bound to be found by Nyshe anyway. It would be easier to escape amidst a crowd of people. The sun was beginning to set.

As I raised my head, a small silhouette stood against the setting sun in the west, casting a dark shadow.

# Chapter 89 - Thief

It was getting late in the day, and the sunlight was turning golden. I assumed that autumn was approaching. It was late August, and even though summer vacation wasn't officially over, the lingering feeling of having unfinished homework was starting to bother me. In other words, it was still summer, after all. And I was in a bad mood.

Well, I didn't really expect this to be a pure sightseeing trip. I knew that we were having a meeting involving the castle, and after that, a large group of adventurers gathered for a major operation. I had anticipated some significant event requiring our intervention.

But even so, I never thought we'd end up turning back without reaching our destination. Give me back my expectations!

I've endured the boredom of this journey for so long! You, sneaky adventurer, you!

However, I didn't fully understand the situation. There seemed to be a major event happening to the south, requiring a large group of adventurers to be transported by ship. We were sent as an advance team with a small group. Along the way, one of the adventurers got greedy and tried to steal the necklace of our caged maid. In response, our caged maid and I fought back, and we managed to catch a couple of the thieves. We even managed to catch one of them.

So far, so good. I understood all of that. But what I couldn't comprehend was what happened next.

During the operation, when a criminal had to be transported to the city, we should have handed over the captured criminals to the team staying to complete the mission. However, the two we caught were taken away by a muscle-bound guy. They continued on their path, so logically, we were the team withdrawing, and the others were continuing the operation.

The withdrawal team consisted of two female adventurers, our caged maid, me, and the coachman. The continuation team consisted of males, while the withdrawal team consisted of females and the coachman.

Currently, the withdrawal team seemed to be in a hurry, which I couldn't fathom. We had repelled the attacking adventurers, so why were they so impatient? I didn't quite understand it, but I wanted to get back quickly too. We hadn't reached our destination, and I couldn't enjoy sightseeing. I'd had enough of this boring journey.

After casting some buffs, it seemed like the two female adventurers riding horses realized something was amiss. They approached the carriage and talked to our caged maid. After a brief conversation, the whole group sped off at an incredible pace.

Wow! This rocking motion must be tough even for our caged maid. Of course, I couldn't endure it either. I decided to float for the duration of the ride. I'd occasionally cast healing magic and otherwise endure the journey in a daze. I just wanted to get back quickly.

We bypassed all the towns we had stopped at on the way here and continued on without stopping. I hadn't eaten breakfast because of the earlier incident, and I hadn't had lunch either. So here we were, running non-stop until evening. Finally, the city with the castle came into view.

The castle walls atop the hill turned crimson in the evening sun on the left, and on the right, they became a dark silhouette.

And something was rolling down. Huh? There's something rolling down there? There's a lot of stuff scattered on the west side of the city, and smoke is rising. But I couldn't see it for long as we entered the city gate. Well, for now, I guess it's fine. I'm tired, and I just want to rest.

The female adventurer who had been talking to the gatekeeper approached us with a happy expression. Our caged maid also seemed relieved, perhaps because we had finally arrived in the city. She had been on edge due to the reckless speed of our journey.

As we entered the city, cheers erupted. It was incredible; everyone was welcoming us so enthusiastically! Why? I knew I had become somewhat popular during our journey, but I didn't think I was this popular. Did everyone realize my true charm in my absence? Not to brag, but fairies do look cute, after all. Well, it's a bit embarrassing.

I waved my hand, and the cheers grew louder from the people nearby, spreading to the back. Amazing. Is this what it's like to be genuinely popular? Everyone looked so happy. Come on, folks, celebrate because the cute fairy is waving her hand! Woo, it feels great!

But wait, there's something malicious in the mix. Is that another thief? That sneaky thief again? It's because of you, sneaky thief, that I remembered the frustration of not reaching our destination despite feeling good. I jumped out of the carriage and went to check on the malicious presence.

There they are. Wait, do I recognize that face? Oh, it's one of the three castle mages, isn't it? Running with a wooden box like that is suspicious. I decided to block their path for now. Hey, officer! It's this guy!

The thief-mage who had tried to escape was blocked by our caged maid's carriage, which had caught up with us.

Furthermore, the people from the city who had followed us started surrounding the area. Realizing they couldn't escape anymore, the thief-mage slumped.

Now, what could be inside that wooden box, I wonder? I tried to open the box a little and check its contents when our caged maid, who had an intense expression, closed it abruptly. Then, she stared at the thief-mage with an intense gaze and retrieved the wooden box.

Wow, what a menacing atmosphere! Even when we were attacked by the adventurer a while ago, she didn't have that expression. What did they steal? Hey, can you at least show me what's inside the box? No? Alright, alright, I get it. But could you please stop making that face? It's getting too close, too close.

The thief-mage was taken away by the city guards.

## **Chapter 90 - Apology**

After retrieving the wooden box from the thief-mage, I parted ways with the female adventurer I had been with and rode back to the castle in a carriage. However, things seemed unusually noisy.

First of all, there was a strong sense of malice emanating from the castle's basement. It was overwhelming. I could feel it everywhere. And there were more people than usual. But whenever they noticed me, everyone would break into huge smiles, so it didn't seem like something bad had happened...

As I returned to my room, which was just the right size for our caged maid and me, I noticed cleaning tools scattered all over the hallway, and my room's door was wide open. This looked like a chaotic scene from a crime!

It seemed like they heard I had returned because Lady Door, Silver-Haired Girl, and Blondie gathered around. Lady Door was holding my doll, which looked worn and tattered.

I had a bad feeling about this. Why was Lady Door holding that doll, and why was it in such a state? The door to my room had been left wide open, and cleaning tools were scattered around... Why was the castle so noisy? How many days had it been since I left?

I suddenly remembered that I had set up a little prank. If someone entered my room more than ten days after I left, the doll in my room would move, emit a bright light, and produce a loud noise. But I didn't know how bright the light would be or how loud the noise would get.

It had probably been about ten days since I left today. It must have activated. No, it definitely activated. And maybe the light and noise were beyond what I had anticipated?

Judging by the scattered cleaning tools in the hallway, I had a feeling



that the culprit who triggered it was probably the apprentice maid. Well-behaved apprentice maids wouldn't make such a mess. If it was indeed the apprentice maid, then the light and noise must have been quite intense.

If a loud explosion occurred in the castle, it would naturally cause a commotion. People would gather. Did I set a limit on how many times that doll could activate? Could it have gone off for each person who gathered?

Uh-oh, Lady Door's smile was creepy. This is bad. Why is she holding the doll in such a way? And Silver-Haired Girl's hair looked disheveled. They looked as if they had just fought a battle. It was terrifying that the apprentice maid wasn't present. What if she got injured?

While everyone kept talking and showing me the battered doll, their expressions remained forced smiles. Phew, it seemed like my little prank had caused just enough trouble to be scolded with exasperated smiles. I hoped it would stay that way.

However, it still felt uncomfortable. I needed to change the subject. I pointed to the wooden box that our caged maid was holding.

Instantly, everyone's expressions tensed up! Uh-oh, maybe I shouldn't have changed the topic! I should have just apologized sincerely! It might be too late now, but I quickly apologized.

# Chapter 91 - The Journey Back

We must return quickly. Thanks to the fairy's magic, we're speeding along the journey home at an astonishing pace, but the anxiety still lingers.

I can't help but feel sorry for the coachmen and the adventurers working hard to control the magically enhanced horses and carriage. While they labor diligently, I'm confined to the carriage, growing increasingly restless.

The Stampede in the southern borderlands was a diversion, a false alarm meant to draw our forces away from the capital.

The real plan was to launch a Stampede near the capital while we were away, providing an opportunity for the Empire to attack the royal castle itself. It's a dire threat.

"We're almost there! We've arrived at the capital!"

"Understood, thank you!"

The seemingly endless journey comes to an end as the coachman announces our arrival. Despite my impatience, I manage to peer at the capital from a small window in the carriage. From this distance, everything appears normal. While there's some smoke rising from the western plains, there doesn't seem to be any immediate signs of combat.

I can't see inside the city due to its fortified walls, but at least from what I can discern, there are no raging fires in the streets, no visible breaches in the walls, and the hilltop royal castle remains untouched, with boats calmly navigating the river.

The only sounds I hear are the rattling of the carriage, the occasional clinking of the cage containing the fairy, and the faint jingling of bells outside the carriage when it sways dramatically. There are no sounds like those of large Stampede creatures on the move.

“It looks like nothing’s happened! At least there doesn’t seem to be any major battles!”

The adventurers seem to agree that nothing seems amiss. Perhaps we managed to return before the Stampede struck.

“...Or maybe it’s already over?”

“What do you mean? The city looks untouched!”

“Look closer! To the west of the city! It seems like there are remnants of some creatures scattered around! Quite a lot of them!”

Listening to the adventurers’ conversation, I take another look at the western side of the capital. Unfortunately, I’m too far away to make out any details of the creature remnants.

However, as we draw closer, various aspects of the situation become clear. The plains to the west of the capital are littered with the corpses of creatures. Adventurers are dismantling them, and the terrain seems to have been altered as if struck by large-scale attack magic. There are guards stationed, presumably assessing the situation, and ordinary people have gathered to watch.

“Unbelievable! Did they really manage to repel the Stampede unscathed? But where did they get such firepower?”

“Wow, this means if the royal castle is safe, we might be able to enjoy some good drinks tonight!”

We arrive at the southern gate, and I use the adventurers as intermediaries to get information from the gatekeepers. We learn that the Stampede has been quelled. However, we still can’t confirm the situation at the royal castle.

The gatekeepers are unaware of any attack on the royal castle, but as the information from the infiltrating adventurers suggested, the

Stampede indeed occurred in the capital. The possibility of an attack on the royal castle remains high. We can't let our guard down yet.

As we enter the capital, cheers erupt from all around. According to the gatekeepers, the fairy's potion was instrumental in successfully defending the capital. The story seems to have already spread throughout the city. Everyone is singing the praises of the fairy.

While there's only one mage capable of using combat magic effectively in the city—the head of the mage guild—thanks to the fairy's magical potions, they were able to employ offensive magic continuously. Furthermore, the curative potions ensured that not a single person died or even got injured during the battle.

The cheers are justified. Typically, once a Stampede occurs, even if it's successfully repelled, casualties are inevitable. To have an entirely bloodless conclusion to a Stampede is unprecedented in human history.

With these thoughts in mind, the fairy suddenly leaves the carriage. I instruct the coachman to follow the fairy, and we find a young mage from the mage guild carrying a wooden box.

It seems he had been trying to escape, but the carriage blocked his path. Once surrounded by the city's residents who had followed the fairy, he gave in and sat down.

The fairy immediately slides the lid of the wooden box partially open and peers inside. I inadvertently catch a glimpse of what's inside.

Why is there a royal crown in there!

There are two possibilities. One is that, due to the successful attack on the imperial capital, this man managed to escape with the royal crown, which serves as proof of the royal lineage. However, given the man's demeanor, slumped and defeated, this seems unlikely. That leaves the other possibility: amidst the chaos, this man pilfered the crown.

The existence of the crown outside the castle is not public knowledge. Whether it was stolen or retrieved for safekeeping, we can't afford for the public to know about the dire situation. On impulse, I press down on the wooden box's lid, obscuring

its contents. I glance at the fairy, curious about how she knew the crown was here.

If the royal castle is indeed safe, then it's imperative to return this crown there promptly. I leave the young mage to the city guards for now and continue towards the royal castle as planned.

## **Chapter 92 - The End of the Day**

We finally arrived at the royal castle after parting ways with the adventurers. Fortunately, there were no signs of Imperial occupation, and our carriage smoothly made its way to the square in front of the castle.

Typically, servants like me would use the back entrance rather than the main one. However, this time, the carriage stopped at the front entrance because the fairy was accompanying us. Here, I could finally get an update on the current situation from the castle's residents.

Leaving the carriage's cargo to the maids, I carefully carried the wooden box containing the royal crown. The fairy, who usually went wherever she pleased, was now nestled against my chest for some reason.

I wanted to return the crown as soon as possible, but I couldn't expect an audience with the king to happen immediately.

Acting recklessly might invite the ire of nobles who prioritized their own interests. So, I decided to first head calmly to the fairy's room. With the fairy present, it would be easier to summon the key figures of the castle to us.

As I arrived at the fairy's room, I noticed the door was left wide open, and cleaning supplies were scattered in the hallway.

Had this place also been attacked?

As I stood there, pondering the situation, Queen, Princess Tires, who appeared worn out like someone after vigorous exercise, and Crown Prince Arland, along with his attendants, came towards me.

I had heard that the fairy doll had attracted the Imperial soldiers away from the castle, but it seemed the damage was more severe than I had heard. The dress it had been wearing was torn, one of its arms was missing, and its face had cracks, not to mention being covered in dirt. From its appearance, I could vividly imagine how intense the battle with the Imperial soldiers had been.

The queen and everyone else, starting with her, expressed their gratitude to the fairy. While it was a great achievement in safeguarding the kingdom, the fairy quietly pointed to the wooden box containing the royal crown, without seeking any recognition. In response, I slid the lid slightly to reveal its contents.

The atmosphere in the room changed immediately, and without a word, the gravity of the situation was conveyed to the queen and her party. The fairy lowered her head in response.

“Well! It’s inconceivable for the fairy to apologize after helping us so much. She had foreseen everything beforehand, took perfect measures for every situation... This... was taken outside the castle, right? But even that has been retrieved for us. There’s no need for apologies,” the queen said.

The Crown Prince Arland echoed her words. I see, I understood now. The fairy had foreseen everything related to this incident and had taken perfect measures in preparation.

Even the fact that adventurers with ties to the Empire had infiltrated and that we might be attacked had been anticipated, and she had prepared flawless countermeasures before leaving the capital.

However, it’s possible that the theft of the actual royal crown from the treasury was an unexpected event.

I had been questioning the urgency of the fairy's return to the capital after learning about the Stampede and the Imperial attack. If she had taken extensive precautions for the capital's issues, there should have been no need for her to rush back so quickly. But in reality, she had reached the capital in just one day.

Perhaps she had foreseen the possibility of the royal crown being stolen. And she had hurried back to the capital to prevent it from being taken outside the city.

Oh, what a humble person she is. Instead of boasting about retrieving the crown that had been taken outside the city, she was apologizing for it.

I handed the wooden box to Crown Prince Arland. With this, my role in this incident was complete.

Various discussions would begin regarding this incident. Awards for those who contributed, accountability for those responsible, and the punishment to be meted out. Plans to prevent a recurrence and identify any moles within the kingdom. There were mountains of issues to address, but the kingdom had survived this day.

Despite being in the presence of royalty, my stomach rumbled loudly.

...I hadn't eaten anything since this morning.

## **Chapter 93 - Perception of the Empire**

"The Stampede was perfectly defended against? The attack on the enemy's castle failed? Even Duke Bastille, the most crucial mole, was used and discarded? And their mage is on the brink of death from a curse? Minister, are these disasters all according to your plan?"

The Marshal of the First Imperial Prince's faction criticized me as if he had accomplished something himself. However, with such a string of failures, there was no way to save face. I never expected everything to be thwarted without any success.

“I’ve heard that you couldn’t contact the spies even before the operation began. Why did you proceed under such circumstances?”

Yes, indeed. Looking back, everything went awry after that ridiculous report. Since that report, I couldn’t get in touch with the spies who had been planted within the kingdom. What’s with all the “Oh, my beloved fairy” nonsense? Are they really attributing this dire situation to the work of the fairy?

“From my perspective, the situation was perfect. Our preparations were flawless, and a few hiccups are to be expected.

We lost only one battalion, while the kingdom not only breached the capital but even the castle itself. The kingdom will remain in turmoil for a while. Besides, wasn’t the decisive battle scheduled for the Garm Period from the beginning?”

“Flawless preparations? Weren’t you predicting an epidemic in the capital around summer? Now, it’s still late summer, and I wonder how long your ‘summer’ will last, Minister?”

Certainly. It might be a good time for the poison bags we planted underground in the capital to take effect. However, I see no signs of an epidemic spreading in the capital. Most likely, information leaked from the captured spies when it started raining, and countermeasures were taken.

“And what about causing a shortage of potions by buying them through multiple routes? Isn’t it highly effective potions that are circulating in abundance in the capital?”

That was a miscalculation as well. Although I couldn’t contact the spies, it seemed that on-site judgment successfully removed the fairies with healing magic from the capital. And, indeed, there was a shortage of potions. However, it seemed that miraculously effective potions, known as “miracle potions,” suddenly appeared from nowhere.



“Well, it was ‘miracle potions,’ wasn’t it? I’ve heard they can fully heal someone on the brink of death with just one bottle. Such highly effective medicine doesn’t even exist in mythological records. The Prince in children’s stories usually wields a more realistic weapon. Are you suggesting that this is all due to fairy tales, Minister? Perhaps it’s time for you to consider retirement.”

This guy keeps pointing out everyone else’s mistakes. I can’t stand people who can only criticize the mistakes of others.

“But now there’s no turning back. We’ve become prisoners of war, and they have material evidence. We can’t continue hiding our involvement as we have in the past. We’ll have to go to war during the Garm Period.”

“I understand. We had always planned for war. There’s no issue with that.”

One of the plans we had spent ten years crafting had failed. However, our original plan was to engage in open warfare.

Even with the rain starting, the kingdom’s diminished power due to this year’s poor harvest won’t recover until after the harvest. There’s no way we can lose.

“The kingdom has no choice but to go to war before they disclose our Empire’s machinations and secure the cooperation of neighboring countries. Whose efforts do you think made this possible?”

“Hmph. Well, watch and see. As long as we win in the end.”

The First Imperial Prince’s faction, always critical of others’ mistakes, won’t win. However, that sword that shoots magical blades is troublesome.

I wonder if there’s any way to steal it...

# Chapter 94 - The Map

I woke up in the morning.

Mornings without the perspective of a human body are quite pleasant, you know.

Last night, after that incident, I was dismissed without any further reprimand. That's because right after Birdcage Maid handed the wooden box to Blondie, Birdcage Maid's stomach let out a loud growl. The atmosphere in the room seemed to change to uproarious laughter, and everything became quite chaotic. Mission accomplished.

I hadn't eaten anything since morning until we reached the castle last night. By the way, I'm a curious creature who can survive without eating, so my stomach doesn't growl naturally.

Afterward, I checked on Apprentice Maid's well-being during the night. Before going to bed, Apprentice Maid gave me a bath. She seemed to be in good spirits.

Apprentice Maid appeared moved by something, but maybe she found the explosion of the doll amusing. Perhaps she enjoys thrill rides like roller coasters; the floating jet coaster that was a big hit with the kids in town might also please her.

Thinking about these things, I finished breakfast quickly. Soon after, Lord Door and the important-looking folks arrived.

They must be quite free. I can only imagine that the Queen's work consists of saying "let it be" to her subjects, and she probably finished her morning "let it be" already. Thus, Lord Door's work for the day was most likely done. Truly, a queen's life.

I thought I might get scolded again for a continuation of last night, but that didn't happen. Instead, I was put in the birdcage and moved to a slightly fancier room.

After I entered the room and was let out of the birdcage, Birdcage Maid made a square shape with her index fingers and thumbs. It was a sign to bring out the map. When I took out the map and pointed to the area around the castle, Birdcage Maid made a gesture with her hands to enlarge it. So, I zoomed in on the castle. Then she gestured for me to shrink it down to show the entire town. We had done this kind of thing many times during our travels, so I was used to it.

Once she seemed satisfied with the map's display, Birdcage Maid went to prepare tea. In her place, Lord Door and some important-looking people peered at the map and began discussing something. They were nodding and murmuring.

I noticed someone sketching the map. It seemed they were focusing on the underground part. Maybe the townspeople here don't know the layout of the underground waterways? They're like mazes, so it's possible they don't have a grasp of it.

After finishing the sketch, they requested an enlargement of the map. I showed Lord Door the map of his castle. He smiled. Soldiers nearby peered at the map of Lord Door's castle and occasionally exchanged words with the soldiers outside the room. Lord Door seemed to be watching them from the corner of his eye. I see, I don't understand any of this.

What are they doing?

While I was spacing out like that, they suddenly brought me a jar of preserved fruits. It seemed familiar, but I couldn't quite remember. What was it?

Ah, right. I wanted to make jam out of it since the cookies weren't sweet enough. But I already have the sweet cookies with the fairy mark, so it's not that important. Well, it might be nice to have some jam to change things up a bit.

When I tried to convey this with my usual pointing gestures, paper and a feather pen were prepared in front of me. The paper seemed like parchment.

Hmm, written communication, huh? Since they prepared it for me, maybe I should give written communication a try. It's not something crucial I absolutely need to convey, so I can try it casually. Besides, I don't know how to write, so it can't be helped.

I dipped the quill in ink and drew a circle on the paper. This circle represented the cookie. But, now that I've drawn it, I think just a circle isn't very cookie-like. I'll draw some dots inside the circle. Ah, that looks more like a cookie, doesn't it?

Next, I drew a bottle. Yeah, this one's easy to understand.

Finally, I added an arrow from the bottle to the cookie. That should convey "put jam on the cookie." Is it hard to understand? Well, I can't write, so there's no helping it.

I looked around, and everyone was gazing at my drawing with solemn expressions. It seems like they didn't get it. Well, it doesn't matter if they didn't.

Afterward, they talked about various things, but honestly, I didn't understand much. My honest impression is that I don't understand anything. Once the discussion was over, there was a moment when they seemed to be waiting for my reaction.

I knew nodding could be dangerous, but if I did nothing, this awkward silence wouldn't end. So, I reluctantly nodded, and everyone seemed relieved. The meeting was adjourned.

I wonder what I just agreed to this time. I'm scared.

## **Chapter 95 - Blue Dots and Red Dots**

There's an overwhelming amount of things that need to be done. Each one of them is a critical issue that takes top priority during peacetime. Neglecting them could even lead to the demise of the kingdom, and it's not just me, the queen, but everyone among the key figures of the kingdom is swamped with tasks.

However, I must make time, even if it seems impossible, to meet with the Fairy Lord and confirm. The key to preventing the empire's invasion undoubtedly lies with the Fairy Lord. At the very least, I must confirm the Fairy Lord's map.

Within the night when the Fairy Lord returned, I was able to get information on the situation of the Vanguard Team tasked with dealing with the Frontier Stampede from a maid accompanying the Fairy Lord. It seems the Fairy Lord had to leave the capital to capture a spy who had infiltrated the Vanguard Team.

Before the spy took any action, they likely judged that we wouldn't believe anyone without evidence of their treachery.

Even if the Fairy Lord had pointed at several adventurers before the Stampede and claimed, "That person is a spy," we wouldn't have been able to act without any proof during those uncertain times. Therefore, the Fairy Lord might have needed to keep an eye on the spy until they took action.

I've come to understand one reason why the Fairy Lord could read the situation so perfectly. According to the maid, the Fairy Lord's map displays enemies and monsters as red dots and all other individuals as blue dots. The Fairy Lord must have been able to identify the spy in advance using this map.

It's an incredible map. I must confirm it as soon as possible. Even with the current situation where important matters are piling up, this takes top priority.

We've received reports from Tires that this map can provide detailed knowledge of the underground structures of the royal castle. It seems that the daughter of Duke Bastille, who was Tires's attendant, was able to locate the hidden door to the underground passage through the Fairy Lord's map.

The Fairy Lord's map can be both a poison and a remedy. By confirming this map, we can understand the structure of the underground passage, which is the Empire's entry route. We can also check if there are any red dots in the underground passage, indicating

lingering enemy soldiers.

We need to confirm the Empire's entry route and hunt down any remaining enemy soldiers. However, in our current situation, where we lack information and military strength, we can't blindly send troops into the underground passage. But with the Fairy Lord's map, we can assess the situation and plan accordingly.

Furthermore, we might be able to identify any remaining spies within the castle.

Just a glance at this map can provide so much information. The fact that it has already been seen by the spy... We must make it clear how much information has been leaked to the Empire.

I've ordered the apprehension of Duke Bastille, but it will take several days for him to be brought to the capital. We won't be able to extract information from him until then.

The spy who infiltrated the Vanguard Team has been taken to the Frontier Earl's town. To hear their testimony, messengers will have to travel back and forth between there and the capital, and even if we expedite it, it will still take at least 15 days.

Honestly, I wanted them to bring the spy directly to the capital. However, considering the circumstances of the Vanguard Team at the time, their decision not to bring the spy to the capital immediately was the correct one.

At present, we are interrogating a large number of captured Imperial soldiers and a member of the Mage Division who attempted to take the royal crown. However, we lack any significant military power until the Second Knight Division returns to the capital. We're in a situation where we can't make any moves. We should consider our actions after confirming the Fairy Lord's map.

And so, in the early morning, I visited the Fairy Lord to confirm the map. First, I asked for a copy of the underground passage's layout.

But it was quite surprising. When I heard about it, I couldn't quite imagine it, but it's not so much a map as it is a model, isn't it? It vividly represents the three-dimensional structure that a paper map can't convey.

If this map were to become widespread, it would change the times. At the moment, it's something that should not be shown to others. I must request the Fairy Lord not to casually display the map in public. It was a blow that the spy had seen it.

After completing the sketch of the underground passage, the next step is to identify the spy. The map indeed shows red and blue dots. We will dispatch troops to locate and identify anyone represented by red dots within the castle.

If there are multiple individuals in close proximity, and we can't determine who the red dot represents, we will assign tasks to each of them and move them accordingly. This meticulous process of matching all the red dots on the map with individuals will take some time.

In the meantime, let's address another matter. I present the preserved fruits that were brought. What was the intention behind placing them in the kitchen?

We've also received reports from the Adventurer's Guild about the situation in the capital during the Stampede. The preparations made by the Fairy Lord in advance contributed to resolving the situation there. Actions that seemed to have no apparent reason at the time have turned out to be part of the Stampede preparations.

Although it's a thought I'd rather not entertain, there is a possibility that these preserved fruits hold crucial significance in our defense against the Empire's invasion. If that's the case, we should find out in advance. However...

The Fairy Lord tilted their head in confusion upon seeing the preserved fruits. It appears that they wonder why these were brought out at this moment.

Quickly, the Fairy Lord's attendant provided them with a quill and parchment for written communication. They began to draw something on the paper.

The way they confidently used the quill, with no hesitation about dipping it in ink and writing on the paper, shows that they are familiar with this method. Whether they knew it beforehand or learned it since coming to the castle is a question.

They've been in the castle for about 60 days now, so it wouldn't be surprising if they observed the use of quills somewhere.

The Fairy Lord completed their drawing swiftly. We all examine it together. The most obvious element is the preserved fruit. The drawing is quite stylized, but given the circumstances, it's highly unlikely that this represents anything other than the preserved fruit.

From the drawing of the preserved fruit, an arrow extends towards a circle. Inside that circle are several dots. What could this signify? I discreetly look around, but no one seems to have understood. We'll discuss this later.

Afterward, I have some requests and messages to convey. Firstly, the map that the Fairy Lord is currently displaying—

please refrain from showing it in public.

...The Fairy Lord doesn't react, but a wise Fairy Lord would likely understand the danger of displaying such a map in public. The reason it was shown in front of Duke Bastille's daughter was perhaps to reveal its presence to us, to coax the spy into action, and to provide us with conclusive evidence.

If the Fairy Lord hadn't shown the map at the Frontier Stampede preparedness meeting, we might still be unaware of its existence. Without knowledge of this map, we would be in a much worse situation, trying to understand the Empire's invasion route and identifying the spy.

At that time, showing the map was a multifaceted decision that



carried various meanings.

Next, I request the Fairy Lord to participate in the parade scheduled for a few days from now. The Fairy Lord seems to be contemplating.

Considering their previous unconventional actions, it might be surprising, but the Fairy Lord is a humble individual.

Despite flawlessly preventing the Empire's invasion, they were apologetic to the extent that they even apologized. Given their humility, they might be reluctant to participate in the parade.

However, in this unstable situation, we can't afford to have the citizens feel anxiety or mistrust any more than necessary.

If the Fairy Lord participates, it will divert the people's attention from their worries. On the contrary, if the Fairy Lord doesn't participate, it might increase people's mistrust.

After a thorough contemplation and looking around, the Fairy Lord finally nods in agreement.

Everyone seems to breathe a collective sigh of relief.

# Chapter 96 - The Floppy Sword

Shortly before noon, I was released, and my first destination was the castle's basement.

There, I sensed an eerie presence, something malevolent. There was definitely nothing like this before I headed south.

Oh? It's a prison cell. Behind iron bars, there's a large group of captives. Did they manage to apprehend a massive gang of thieves while I was away? But their attire resembles that of soldiers. Castle soldiers being captured in their own castle?

That doesn't add up; their equipment seems different.

Could there have been some kind of conflict? If so, these imprisoned soldiers don't seem injured.

Lost in thought, I inadvertently caught the attention of the captive soldiers. After a loud shout from one of them, the others noticed me too, and chaos erupted – a cacophony of fear and anger. Wow, what a scene from hell...

When I moved left, the shouting soldier went left, and the frightened ones went right. When I moved right, the shouting soldier went right, and the frightened ones went left. It started to become rather amusing. Should I go right and pretend to go left? No, stick to the right! Or maybe, left!

The agitated shouting soldier began banging on the iron bars, but a guard stationed there stopped him, wearing an exasperated expression. This guard is from our castle; I should probably leave him to his duties.

As I made my way back upstairs from the basement, I spotted the treasure vault. Curiosity piqued, I decided to take a look inside. I wonder if there are any new treasures? Whoa! It's a doll!

I thought it had become tattered and vanished from the room, but it seems it was placed in the treasure vault. It's striking a cool pose with a little sword and spear. Why on earth are they treating this battered doll as a treasure?

Wait, could it be? The room I had mistakenly considered a treasure vault is actually just a storage room? I see... I always thought there were too few treasures for it to be a real vault.

Upon closer inspection, I noticed that the masterpiece sword I made was also missing. It was incredibly well-crafted, and perhaps someone felt it was a waste to leave it in storage? It might even be in the actual treasure vault by now.

Afterward, I ventured into the city. It could be that today is a festival day. There's definitely more commotion compared to a regular day before I went south. Music is coming from various places, people are singing, and some are even drinking during the daytime. It's undoubtedly a festival. There also seem to be more stalls than usual.

As I approached, the festive spirit among the city's people intensified. I received a piece of meat from a very cheerful elderly man nearby. That set off a chain reaction, and I received various other items from others. Whoa, I can't carry all of this! The area around me is filled with floating food items I received through magic.

Alright, I should contribute to the festive mood too! I scattered light with my magic. The people in the city got even more excited, and some even started worshipping me. See, it's light! Worship me! Hahaha!

While enjoying the food I received, I explored the city. Flower pots that were barren when I first arrived are now brimming with blossoms. In the central square of the city, there are people who seem to be doing some kind of construction or survey work. They might be setting something up for the festival. Does that mean today isn't the actual festival day?

Occasionally, I played with the local children, who were running

around energetically. They were engrossed in a playful form of sword-fighting, as if they were heroes. It seemed a bit dangerous...

Back when I first arrived, they were playing with frog toys and engaging in calmer activities. But recently, they've become obsessed with sword-fighting as if they've seen a hero. They were energetically swinging wooden sticks, and I couldn't help but worry they might get hurt.

Well, it's a festival today, so I thought, why not give them a safe sword from me?

To ensure they wouldn't get hurt while playing sword-fighting, I created a soft sword. When it hits something, it goes all floppy. But I made it look like a solid metal sword at first glance because kids care about appearances, right?

The design is different from the sword I made for the treasure vault, in case they connect it with the castle's treasures. So, I used a different design. To make it clear that it's a gift from me, I designed the handle with motifs of fairy wings.

The floppy swords came in five colors, the same as before: red, blue, green, yellow, and brown. When drawn from their scabbards, the blades emit a soft, colored glow. It looks cool. When swung, it makes a "whoosh" sound. Well, hold on, kids. It's almost ready. There you go! I present them to you! Ta-da!

Now, now, no fighting! Share and play nicely together!

I continued playing with the kids, and before I knew it, it was already late into the night, after being invited to join the adults in their revelry.

## Chapter 97 - Emergency Meeting

The afternoon following undoubtedly the most eventful day of my life, Mother convened an emergency meeting, gathering prominent figures.

Our enemies had breached the royal castle itself, so holding an emergency meeting was only natural.

“Then, you were in possession of all five Fairy Swords simultaneously and used Earth, Wind, and Water attributes, correct?”

“That’s correct.”

I responded succinctly to the questions posed by the nation’s dignitaries.

“What are your thoughts? The Empire might be aware of the existence of the Fairy Swords.”

“During the attack, there was chaos on both sides. It’s undeniable that someone might have seen the Fairy Swords being taken away.”

“We should prepare for the worst. They might have observed that you possessed five swords, each imbued with a different color of magic and displaying the effects of three elements. We should assume that

they are aware of the existence of all five.”

“In that case, how much does the Empire know about the Fairy Spirit?”

It seemed like the prolonged discussion about the Fairy Swords had concluded, shifting the topic. Despite the urgency of the situation, they were grilling me on whether it was unauthorized to take all five swords at once, whether it was necessary, and other such matters. It was trying to be scrutinized for such a long period, even in the midst of an emergency.

“It appears that the captured Empire soldiers were aware of the Fairy Spirit’s existence.”

“They would, I presume. The Royal Capital Merchant Guild has been promoting the Fairy Spirit, and it’s become a popular topic among the commoners. People have started gathering in hopes of being blessed by the Fairy Spirit, so the Empire couldn’t possibly be unaware. The real question is how much they know about the relationship between the Fairy Swords, the improvements in crop yields, and the miracles attributed to the Fairy Spirit.”

“Regarding that, it seems the Empire soldiers were largely unaware of the dangers posed by the Fairy Spirit. However, with the recent exploits of the Fairy Spirit Doll, they will likely conclude that the appearance matched that of the Fairy Spirit.”

“Hmm...”

“As I mentioned earlier, we should prepare for the worst. Assuming that the Empire is fully aware of the Fairy Spirit’s powers, we should plan our future actions accordingly.”

“Now, let’s move on to the matter of identifying any infiltrators.”

Despite her previous silence, Mother now shifted the conversation somewhat forcefully.

“Based on information from the Empire soldiers we captured and today’s efforts to identify infiltrators, it can be concluded that there are currently no infiltrators within the castle.”

Infiltrators identified today? This meeting started in the afternoon. Can they confidently declare that they’ve already finished identifying infiltrators by morning?

“Excuse me, Queen Mother, what is the basis for asserting that there are no infiltrators?”

Naturally, others shared my question.

“We received cooperation from the Fairy Spirit and employed special means to thoroughly inspect the castle. I won’t disclose the details of our methods, but rest assured, nothing escaped our notice.”

“...I see.”

“Furthermore, the information that the Fairy Spirit has a means to flush out infiltrators might have leaked to the Empire.”

“Hmm...”

“There’s no need to be pessimistic. The Empire won’t risk sending infiltrators when they know they’ll be detected immediately.”

“Oh!”

“That’s a relief.”

The participants in the meeting murmured with relief. It seemed they understood that with the knowledge that infiltrators could be swiftly identified, the Empire wouldn’t easily send infiltrators to begin with.

My mother was truly remarkable. She had anticipated the Empire’s attack in advance, handled it perfectly with the cooperation of the Fairy Spirit, and likely already had a script for what to do next in her mind. I wondered if I could become like her someday.



“There’s one more report concerning the Fairy Spirit. Around midday, the Fairy Spirit visited the underground dungeon and confirmed the condition of the Empire’s soldiers. Due to the Fairy Spirit’s presence, the Empire’s wounded soldiers have all made a full recovery.”

“I see. If even the wounded from torture have recovered, it means we could subject them to further questioning.”

“Tires, you’ve become quite ruthless all of a sudden...”

Upon receiving the report from the soldiers, I inadvertently muttered, earning a disapproving look from my mother. I thought it was a logical idea, but it seemed to elicit an atmosphere of unease from those around me.

“Now, before we discuss future actions, let’s organize the information once more.”

The Prime Minister, sensing a lull in the discussion, spoke up and scanned the room. Considering the awkward atmosphere, it was honestly a welcome change.

“The Empire, which was in a ceasefire, has been experiencing intensified succession disputes. The faction supporting the second prince, who is lower in the line of succession, attempted to take our kingdom to gain merit. The covert operations began during the previous war and included a variety of activities such as causing droughts, potion hoarding leading to shortages, the attempted assassination of the former Prime Minister, the attempted murder of

the Queen, the assassination attempt on Princess Tires, the distribution of poison within the capital, interference with trade and information by bandits, and the Stampedes.”

The former Prime Minister was the current Prime Minister’s father. His face contorted slightly when he mentioned his father’s assassination attempt.

When the list of their actions was presented again, it became clear that they had been quite audacious in their endeavors.

This included covert operations that we hadn’t been aware of, such as the distribution of poison within the capital. The assassination attempt on me referred to the incident when I was ambushed by bandits during my return from the neighboring country. It seemed that this too was the work of the Empire.

“As for the poison, there should have already been some noticeable effects, but there’s no concrete evidence of any significant impact. It’s possible that the Fairy Spirit has already resolved the issue, but it requires further investigation.”

I had assumed that the Fairy Spirit spent their days freely playing around the city, but it seemed that they had been actively countering the Empire’s covert operations behind the scenes. Today, the Fairy Spirit had visited the city again, but I wondered if they were still engaged in their struggle against the Empire’s schemes.

“Furthermore, the details of the curses, how they managed to stop the rain, and how they induced the Stampedes remain unknown. After the return of the Second Knight Division, it’s imperative that we confirm the underground passage, which was the route the Empire used to infiltrate.”

I was the only one who had witnessed the Empire's soldiers emerging from the underground passage. I had hoped to contribute in some way during their infiltration, but I had been excluded from the group.

“Additionally, the Empire managed to advance to the capital without detection by our Eastern Border Patrol. This raises suspicions of a breach in our border defenses or the existence of alternative routes. This verification is also essential.”

The Eastern Border Patrol was under the command of my second brother, the Second Prince. If the Empire had managed to breach their defenses without being detected, he would surely be quite frustrated. It had been a year since I'd last seen him. I wondered how he was doing.

“Currently, the Second Knight Division is moving to apprehend Duke Bastille, who is the primary suspect as the main infiltrator. If we can interrogate Duke Bastille, we may obtain additional information. Additionally, two infiltrators who were masquerading as adventurers have been captured and are being transported to the capital. However, they are currently detained in the frontier region, so the interrogation won't take place for at least 15 days.”

“Very well. Let's begin the discussion about our future actions.”

From here on, the discussion would focus on our strategy against the Empire. They had taken advantage of us for far too long. Now, it was time to strike back.

# Chapter 98 - Reflection

Various discussions about the future strategies against the Empire took place.

Once the general direction was decided, it seemed like the meeting was about to conclude. However, Queen Mother pulled out a parchment and a bottle. It appeared that the meeting was not over yet.

“Queen Mother, is that the bottle that the Fairy Spirit had prepared?” someone inquired.

“Yes, that’s correct,” Queen Mother confirmed.

A bottle prepared by the Fairy Spirit? While I wouldn’t be surprised by any unfamiliar fruits associated with the Fairy Spirit at this point, why was it referred to as “the one”?

“And what about this parchment?” someone else asked.

“This parchment contains additional handwritten explanations by the Fairy Spirit regarding this bottled item.”

“And what does this picture depict?” a nobleman inquired, gesturing towards the drawing of the Fairy Spirit.

The Queen Mother gave a sly smile and replied, “Hehehe, why don’t you try to decipher the intent yourselves?”

The drawing depicted the Fairy Spirit, and it was accompanied by what seemed to be a depiction of the bottled item and a circle with dots and lines.

“When we talk about fruits, didn’t His Majesty gain extraordinary

powers after consuming fruits gifted by the Fairy Spirit?” someone mentioned.

“That’s true, but the fruits I consumed were palm-sized. This is something entirely different,” King Father replied. This was his first contribution to the meeting, surprising many. Rumor had it that he was quite lazy and rarely spoke during meetings, so it seemed that the rumors were true.

“Could it be that this has different effects than what His Majesty consumed?”

“No, no, I’ve never seen such fruits. Is it even edible?”

“I heard they were placed in the kitchen. Would our wise Fairy Spirit place inedible fruits in the kitchen without telling anyone?”

“What about for brewing alcohol? They were placed near a sunny window. In a kitchen, the humidity would be different.”

“But for alcohol-making, the fruits should be intact. These seem to be rotting.”

Everyone started to voice their opinions about the Fairy Spirit’s fruits. However, the bottle was accompanied by the parchment. Therefore...

“Perhaps we should consider the intent of the parchment alongside the bottle. When you seal rotten items, they can burst.

The diagram seems to match the position of the dots on the parchment. And this circle here... Could it be that the Fairy Spirit is instructing us to explode this bottle among enemy soldiers?”

“Wait, Princess, are you suggesting that the Fairy Spirit, who possesses god-like powers and has effortlessly countered the Empire’s covert operations, is providing us with such a childlike solution to deal with enemy soldiers?”

“Then, what does this drawing represent? If it’s related to the bottled item, it might have some sort of offensive or disruptive ability.”

“In my opinion, these points might represent a positional relationship. Maybe planting the seeds at the marked positions, or the location of a structure with a similar configuration...”

“But what is this circle indicating? A location? Without any hints, it’s difficult to identify a place based on just a circle, isn’t it?”

“Perhaps it refers to the capital, the royal palace, or even the Imperial territory or capital...”

“To throw the bottle into the Imperial capital?”

“Princess, you seem a bit fixated on throwing it, don’t you?”

“Hmm...”

“Let’s start by exploring possibilities. If there are fewer fruits in the bottle than the number of dots on the diagram, we can at least conclude that the idea of ‘planting them according to this arrangement’ is incorrect.”

“Shall we open it then? Is that acceptable, Your Majesty?”

“Yes, go ahead and open it.”

Queen Mother gave her consent without any hesitation. It seemed that she was aware of the intent behind this bottled item. Otherwise, she wouldn’t have allowed it to be opened, considering the potential consequences.

Afterwards, when the fruits were counted, it turned out that the number of fruits in the bottle matched the number of dots in the diagram.

# Chapter 99 - Contemplation

In the small meeting room of the Adventurer's Guild, Sub-Master explained various details to me. It felt a bit strange that they were sharing so much information with a new receptionist like me, but I had no choice but to listen.

“Very soon, the main force for dealing with the Borderland Stampede will return. They will disembark just before reaching the capital and proceed by land towards the Western Gate.”

“Um, am I going too?”

“Of course, you're going. After all, you played a pivotal role in the Stampede defense.”

“I didn't even hear about this!”

“That's why we're informing you now.”

Seems like it's already a decided matter. No matter what I say, it's a compulsory participation.

“We'll also head to the Western Gate simultaneously, and once there, we'll rendezvous with the returning adventurers and the Second Knights coming from the north. After that, the Archmage and the Fairy Spirit, along with others from the castle, will join us, and we'll have a triumphal parade.”

“Wait, so I'm participating too?”

“You're an essential part of the Stampede's bloodless defense.”

“Ugh, but I didn't agree to any of this!”

“Don’t complain. The parade will start from the Western Gate, proceed to the central square, pause there for a while, and then we’ll have the unveiling ceremony for the Hero Statue. After that, we’ll change direction to the north and march until just before the Noble District.”

“The Hero Statue, you mean the one for Duster-san, right? I’m amazed it could be made in such a short time.”

Indeed, there’s a statue of the first king on the south side of the central square’s fountain. But now, a new statue of Duster-san will be placed on the west side of the fountain. It’s astonishing how an unimpressive middle-aged man who used to drink at the guild’s tavern all the time will be on par with the first king. You never know what can happen in this world.

“Just before the Noble District, the adventurers from the Borderland Mission will leave. The Second Knights and the adventurers from the capital defense team will proceed to the castle, where we’ll have an audience. After that, there will be a party. Your dress for the party will be prepared on the castle side.”

“A party? I have to attend a party with nobles? Um, can I decline?”

“It’s mandatory.”

“Ugh.”

“Once that’s over, the following day we’ll hold the Guildmaster Inauguration Ceremony.”

“Huh?”

“The current Guildmaster will step down, and I’m scheduled to become the next Guildmaster.”

“What!? But why?”



“Because of the false information that led to the relocation of our forces from the Stampede area to elsewhere, despite the Stampede occurring in our assigned district. The headquarters has deemed the current Guildmaster inadequate for this.”

“But isn’t the Adventurer’s Guild supposed to stay neutral in conflicts between nations? This was a result of one nation’s extensive covert operations. It doesn’t seem fair to hold the Guildmaster responsible for not preventing it.”

This whole situation was caused by a large-scale covert operation from one nation. Holding the Guildmaster responsible for not preventing it despite the Guild’s neutral stance seems quite unfair. The Guildmaster is being treated unfairly...

“That’s classified information. Don’t speak of it lightly.”

“But everyone has a hunch that the Stampede was artificially caused, right?”

Orcs, which shouldn’t have been near the capital, suddenly appeared, almost a thousand of them, from a small forest meant for beginners. Everyone was in an uproar about how so many orcs could fit into such a small area.

“Officially, it’s attributed to Duke Bastille’s scheme. The current Guildmaster failed to see through Duke Bastille’s plan, got deceived by the diversionary information, and exposed the district under our jurisdiction to the risk of destruction.

That’s why the Guildmaster is being removed.”

“Oh, so it’s being blamed on a noble from within the kingdom, not the Empire. But didn’t this Stampede serve as part of the Empire’s invasion? I wonder who all are aware of that... I feel like I’ve stumbled upon too much information.”

“Anyway, the Knights’ participation in the triumphal parade is to save face for the royal family. The official story is that they successfully

apprehended Duke Bastille after anticipating his involvement in the Stampede. The fact that the Knights were left out of this Stampede defense, well, the royal family can't accept that."

"But I think everyone knows..."

"In this world, there's a difference between what's said and what's meant. The Guild headquarters, for example, reports the official version of events."

Ugh.

"Oh, by the way, who will become the next Sub-Master then? If the Sub-Master is becoming the Guildmaster, who's the next Sub-Master?"

"Good question. The Guild headquarters strongly recommends you to become the new Sub-Guildmaster."

"What!? Why!?"

Why!? Why me!? What's going on!?

"You are being highly praised by the headquarters for being part of the historic achievement of achieving a bloodless defense in the Stampede when there was no military power left."

"But I just went into the Alchemist Guild's warehouse! If it's about being a key player in the bloodless defense, then Duster-san should become the Sub-Master, right?"

"Why? You entered the battlefield with absolutely no fighting force and yet achieved a rare feat in human history, a bloodless defense. The headquarters values that."

"Uh, all I did was rush into the Alchemist Guild's warehouse! If it's about being a key player in the bloodless defense, then Duster-san

should be the Sub-Master, shouldn't he?"

"Why not? He has such remarkable abilities. It would be a waste for him to retire anytime soon."

"Is this decision... already final?"

"Yes."

Oh no! Being a Sub-Master is too heavy for me! I'll be too self-conscious, and I don't even know how to interact with my seniors. Plus, if I become the Sub-Master, it means that the current Guildmaster will be my subordinate! I don't want that!

"Duster-san is so capable. Isn't it premature to force him into retirement?"

"That's... a decision from the top. I don't have a say in it."

Oh no!

# Chapter 100 - Parade Of Something

Yay! Whooo-hooo!

I'm currently at the forefront of a parade, and all the townspeople are watching. I'm not quite sure what kind of parade it is, but today must be the main day of the festival. It's like a float parade! Yay!

When I woke up this morning, there were already various people in my room, mostly maids. From there, I went through makeup, got into a dress, and ended up here at the West Gate.

It seems that outside the West Gate is the assembly point for parade participants. We lined up there and started the parade.

Receptionist-chan and the liquor guy were there too. I thought about going to say hello, but the cage maid performed a strange dance, so I decided not to.

The parade moved down the center of the street, and the sides were filled with spectators. Everyone was smiling. People on the second and third floors of the buildings also leaned out and threw confetti. I thought about how someone would have to clean up all this confetti later, and I decided to turn it into flower petals. It's more eco-friendly that way.

At the front of the parade were two foot soldiers holding large flags. They were like the kind you see at cheerleading competitions, big and sparkly with golden fringes. One was probably the national flag of this country, like the one that's raised in the castle square on sunny mornings. I couldn't tell what the other flag was.

Next came the music band, playing lively tunes. Following them was the horse-drawn carriage I'm on, a luxurious one without a roof, pulled by two black horses. The carriage had golden trimmings, and I made the edges light up with electricity.

In parades, there's usually a music band at the front, so I get why

they're leading. This means that the next in line is the actual front, so I'm pretty much at the forefront. Since I'm almost at the front, I guess it's safe to say I'm the star. I'm quite popular in this town, and it wouldn't be surprising if I were chosen as the star of the festival parade!

The cage maid didn't participate in the parade; instead, the silver-haired girl rode in her place. I was flying around the carriage while a stranger acted as the driver.

The silver-haired girl was also smiling and waving, but it's surprising that she can smile too. I always thought she had a gloomy vibe. Maybe I should get her a toy that can make her smile. But, hmm, even though she's still young, her demeanor is quite mature. Would she really be happy with a toy? Maybe something like jewelry would be more appreciated at her age?

Behind my carriage were the knights. They weren't in full plate armor; instead, they wore relatively light armor with metal accents in key places. Some knights were carrying flags, but their equipment didn't seem to be the ornate parade type. It looked more functional. I can't help but feel like something's missing...

Oh, maybe this is the group that left the castle a while ago. They must have finally returned. Coming back and immediately being thrust into a festival parade must be quite busy.

The second carriage, which was carrying the liquor guy and Receptionist-chan, was behind my carriage. Also, the muscle lady and the chubby guy were there. I was thinking of going over to say hi, but then the cage maid started dancing strangely again, so I decided against it.

Behind the cage was a wagon with bars. If I knew the background and purpose of this festival, maybe I'd understand the significance of that cage. Perhaps, long ago, they captured some incredible creature, and that's the origin of this festival.

Following the cage were the adventurers, a lot of them walking. Since this is a parade involving adventurers, it might be a festival

celebrating the capture of some formidable monster.

Muscle Lady and Chubby Guy are important figures in the Adventurer's Guild. Receptionist-chan has also attended castle meetings, so maybe she's on the important side too.

That much makes sense, but I don't understand why Liquor Guy is with them. He's always drinking and seems a bit aimless. Maybe he's really important, so he doesn't need to work? If that's the case, he should have tried to be more charming.

By the way, Muscle Lady was supposed to have gone south, but she's back now. They were supposed to move a lot of adventurers by ship, but I wonder if some of the adventurers walking behind us just got back as well. Everyone seems to be working hard.

Up ahead, the music is playing, and the cheers from the crowd are loud and continuous. Despite all the horses walking, you can hardly hear the clatter of their hooves. It's impressive.

When the silver-haired girl waves, the cheers in that direction get even louder. She's really popular. Me? Well, you see, I'm small, so even if I wave, people from a distance probably can't see me well. It's not that I'm unpopular; it's just that waving my hand won't make much difference.

The road from the West Gate, where the parade is progressing, gently curves to the left. We couldn't see what was ahead, but gradually, we caught sight of the Central Square. The fountain, which used to be dry, is now gushing water merrily. In front of the fountain, something covered with a white cloth has been set up. And beside that is Uncle Leader.

Upon arriving at the Central Square, the carriage I'm on made a loop around the square before stopping. It formed a circle around the fountain with the rest of the parade. Next to my carriage is an adventurer from the end of the parade. The music band moved in front of the white cloth.

After a while, the adventurers' guild carriage arrived, circumventing the knight's column. And then, Liquor Guy stood in front of the white cloth. Wait, is Liquor Guy the star of this festival? I thought I was the star... This is a bit embarrassing.

Then something like a ceremony began. It's a festival, so maybe it's like an offering to the gods? To the music of the band, Uncle Leader pulled the white cloth. Accompanied by a fanfare, what appeared was... a statue of Liquor Guy.

Why?

# Chapter 101 - Triumphal Parade

“Mom, we’re almost in the capital.”

“Oh, I’m sorry...”

For the past few years, our village, like many others, had been struggling due to poor harvests. We had been living on the edge, slowly depleting our reserves to survive the winters. We had resorted to rationing, but even then, it seemed like we might not make it through this year. The entire village was in a similar situation.

In the midst of all this, my mother fell ill. It started as a few well-wishing words from the neighbors, but her condition worsened over time, and it seemed like she wouldn’t recover. With our workforce already diminished due to rationing, our family had come to terms with the possibility that we might not make it through the next year.

We could only hope that the lives of our sold siblings would be better than ours. Most of them were headed to the western country, where their magical talents could potentially lead to success. There were rumors about those sent west being used for magical experiments and suffering, but we didn’t know if they were true.

Then, things changed when the rain came. A trade caravan arrived. The increased activity of bandits due to several years of poor harvests had disrupted trade routes, and small villages like ours hadn’t seen a trade caravan in years.

Our village had become a sort of isolated island, and it was only through the arrival of the caravan that we learned that other places had suffered similarly. However, the rain had changed everything. Ships could move again, and the areas where bandits were active had shifted south, reopening trade routes. Not only that, but fairies had visited the capital and ended the bad harvests.

Among the traders, there was a minstrel. The minstrel sang of the various exploits of the fairies. Each story seemed like a fairy tale, too



fantastical to be true. I had never read a storybook, but the tales I had heard being passed down seemed to be just like this.

They said that when fairies passed, with a wave of their hand, withered crops would flourish, and flowers would bloom abundantly. They said that when the fairy scattered light, all injuries and illnesses would be healed. If that was true, it was like having a deity among us.

With the partial end of the bad harvests due to the influence of the fairies, crops were now being traded, and it seemed like our village might make it through the winter. However, our home was short on labor without my mother's help, and we were still at risk for the coming year.

If there was no hope for our future, I thought I might as well try my luck with the scarcely believable fairies. With desperate hope, I set off for the capital with my ailing mother. This was likely our only chance, both in terms of reserves and physical strength.

Luckily, we arrived in the capital without issues. And there, I was astonished. Everyone was smiling, looking relaxed. It was a distance that an adult could have covered on foot in a single day, yet the contrast with my village was stark.

"Hey there, young lad, did you come to see the fairies too?"

"Y-yes."

"I see, I see. Everyone's here to see the fairies now! Normally, you might not even catch a glimpse of them, but you're in luck! Tomorrow, there's a parade, and the fairies will be part of it."

"Is that so? Thank you very much!"

It seemed that due to the influence of the fairies, many people were visiting the capital now. We couldn't find lodging for the night because of it, but luckily, we were allowed to spend the night in the

surplus space of the Merchants' Guild.

There, I heard another astonishing story. Just a few days ago, there had been a stampede in the capital, they said. And miraculously, it had been defended without anyone getting injured.

One mage had been casting magic almost non-stop for an entire day, and one swordsman had defeated the remaining monsters. If that was true, they were true heroes. And the fairies were said to have aided them. Tomorrow was a parade to celebrate their triumphant return.

The parade the next day was magnificent. Even the neighboring country of Eneria, famous for its magic, couldn't have put on a parade like this. The music band played triumphant tunes, and the carriages that followed were dazzling with their seven colors. The confetti thrown by the people turned into a shower of flowers, filling the air with a gentle fragrance.

"Wow, it's beautiful..."

"Yes, it is, Mom."

"At the end of my life, seeing something like this makes me happy..."

"Don't say that. How's your health?"

"Oh, I suddenly feel so energetic. It's like I was never unwell."

"Really!?"

Seeing my mother's improved complexion, which had been pale just yesterday, I couldn't help but be surprised.

Amidst this almost otherworldly parade and the mysterious transformation of paper into flowers, even the other people who had seemed unwell were regaining their vitality. It truly felt like a paradise here.

Except for the apothecaries who were painstakingly collecting the fallen petals.

# Chapter 102 - The Covered Carriage

After the grand celebration of the Liquor Man statue, the parade procession moved towards the entrance of the noble district.

It seemed like the Birdcage Maid had anticipated our arrival as she was waiting just before the entrance to the noble district. Along with Silver-Haired Girl, I was immediately ushered into a covered carriage.

As soon as we were out of sight from the outside, Silver-Haired Girl's smile disappeared in an instant. It was quite scary.

Her change in demeanor was startling. The usual grumpy Silver-Haired Girl was back.

The covered carriage was quite spacious, and after Birdcage Maid and Silver-Haired Girl, Uncle, Muscle Guy, Chubby, Receptionist Little Miss, Liquor Man, and even an unfamiliar man carrying a bow all boarded.

Well, regarding the man with the bow, calling him "uncle" might be a bit too young for him. He probably would prefer being called "big brother." He seems like the type to say something like, "Call me big bro." I thought about mixing words as usual to come up with a nickname, but if I mixed "uncle" and "big brother," it would end up as "grandpa"

linguistically, implying he's even older. So, let's go with Bow Big Bro. As for the bow, it doesn't have a string, so maybe it's just for decoration.

Birdcage Maid took out a map and began signaling something. She sure loves her maps. Is there a map craze going on?

She unfolded the map and, as usual, adjusted the scale according to instructions. Everyone peered at the map and engaged in discussions, an atmosphere that didn't quite fit the festive mood of a parade.

Ah, I might have figured it out. Or maybe I've already figured it out.

Initially, I thought they were checking the parade's progress or the festival's situation. However, it seemed different. They're probably trying to identify the adventurers marked in red dots. I see, so that's why this group is here.

In other words, the adventurers tried to rob the Castle's pets and their caretaker maids. As their owner, Silver-Haired Girl probably thought, "What the heck is the Adventurers' Guild doing?" and called for the Guild's higher-ups. Then, Birdcage Maid and I are the victims here, so they're present to witness the apology.

Well, it's only natural, right? Birdcage Maid nearly got killed; there's no way she'd accept just an apology. Oh man, remembering that is making me angry!

So, after the apology, what's next? Of course, it's about preventing a recurrence. And there's a splendid tool for that: my map. If it's a robbery or something similar, the adventurers in the red dots should be identified. That's why this group was assembled.

In other words, I might be getting used here. But if it leads to peace, I don't mind giving out as many maps as they want.

It's not like they'll run out.

Most of the adventurers who had walked alongside the parade seemed to be dispersing at this point. Others, including the Knights, continued toward the castle. The procession of this large group, including the carriages, looked more like a march than a parade; it was quite imposing.

Inside the covered carriage, the discussion continued, and every now and then, Receptionist Little Miss's exaggerated reactions were inserted. She knew when to react and always seemed impressed. She's quite good at reacting. She's like a reaction comedian. I end up talking a lot because I want to see her reactions. She's Comedian Little Miss.

As we advanced to the plaza in front of the castle, we were welcomed grandly. Normally, this vast open space was empty, but today, soldiers with flags and soldiers playing trumpet-like instruments lined both

sides.

Hmm, I wonder if there are festival-like events not only in the town but also at the castle. Based on the size of the crowd here, it seems like something extraordinary happened. After Silver-Haired Girl accomplished a feat worthy of having a statue in the town's central square, she paraded through the city and was now headed to the castle. I assume there'll be an audience with the royal family afterward?

Liquor Man, who should undoubtedly be today's main character, hasn't said a word since getting on the covered carriage.

He's like air. Is it okay for him to be so inconspicuous? He's a famous person in town, someone who has a statue in the central square.

As I was thinking about that, Liquor Man said something. I see, I don't understand. Is he saying he wants a drink?

Words are, well, it might be good to learn them, but at the moment, I don't understand, and we're still enjoying ourselves just fine. Besides, I couldn't even learn English properly despite having teachers and study materials. I spent several years studying with the perfect setup of English text and its Japanese translation side by side, but I still couldn't master English.

I don't think I can learn an entirely different world's language without any hints, and I really don't want to study.

So, what I can do is, well, just nod.

# Chapter 103 - Situation Check

“What!? So, you don’t even know how they were killed?”

“No, we know how they were killed. Both of them were stabbed in the heart from behind. Judging by the size and depth of the wounds, it was likely done with a short dagger. What we don’t know is how the perpetrator managed to infiltrate.”

The guild master delivered shocking news that Zanten and Nos, who had been apprehended for collaborating with the Empire, had been killed in the remote city’s prison!

I’m just a rookie, but for some reason, I’ve been assigned as the sub-master. Just when I thought the guild master had returned, I received news that Zanten and Nos, who I considered my comrades, had been apprehended, and at the same time, I learned they had died. The developments are so overwhelming; it’s hard to keep up!

“Zanten had a magical item that could make her disappear, and it was taken from her. The purpose was likely to silence them and recover the magical item.”

“So, so, could it be that the perpetrator disappeared and infiltrated that way?”

If you can disappear, you can infiltrate without being noticed, right? That’s just common sense.

“That’s a possibility, but disappearing alone wouldn’t get them inside the prison, right? Zanten and the others were in the back of the cell, and they were stabbed from behind. Somehow, they got inside the prison or controlled only the dagger...”

“Could they have used a throwing knife with a cord attached to

retrieve it?”

“Wow! Well done, sub-master! That could be it!”

Sub-master has a slightly proud expression. It’s quite a confident deduction!

“Well, no, the bodies were found facing this way. If it was thrown from outside the cell, it should have been stabbed in the chest and fallen on the other side.”

“I see.”

Sub-master’s deduction was off the mark.

“Before you question His Highness the Princess, I have a question. Why did you capture Zanten and the others? As adventurers, isn’t it the policy of the Adventurers’ Guild to remain uninvolved even if the kingdom’s adventurers collaborate with the Empire?”

“Are you an idiot? If it’s revealed that adventurers caused the stampede intentionally, the Empire has nothing to do with it. Regardless, adventurers attacking the king’s servants, in other words, ordinary people, is unacceptable. Capturing them is a matter of course.”

“I see.”

There have been too many events, and it’s all getting a bit confusing. Amidst the loud information about the stampede and castle assault, some concerning information about disappearing magical items has come up so casually. Normally, the discovery of a disappearing magical item alone would have caused a huge uproar. I wonder what kind of security measures they’ll take in the future...

“So, did you manage to extract any information from the captured adventurers before they were silenced?”



The Princess, with her stern expression, asked the guild master. Her smiles from the parade seemed like a lie. This is what royalty is like. She's so young, yet she's probably already skilled in adult maneuvers. Scary...

By the way, the reason the princess participated in the parade was apparently to promote the idea that "one of the kingdom's princesses brought the Fairy Lord." They wanted to boost the public's support for the royal family due to recent issues like the poor harvests.

"Well, no, they attacked me on the first night in the remote city, so I couldn't get much information out of them..."

The guild master, who usually talks loudly and confidently to anyone, seems quite timid in front of royalty. This must be a difficult report to make.

"I see... It does seem too early for the information about their capture to leak on the first day. Were there any signs of surveillance?"

"No, we didn't notice any such signs... But given the circumstances, it's likely they were being monitored."

"Hmm..."

As the princess contemplated, the sub-master smoothly changed the topic. The sub-master is quite skilled at steering conversations. Could they be the potential next guild master?

"By the way, regarding that map that can identify adversaries, how is it working out?"

The princess shifted the discussion, and the sub-master promptly responded. The sub-master is adept at changing topics when needed. Perhaps they have the qualities of a future guild master.

"It appears that there were two individuals. However, please be

cautious when detaining them. We also identified people with red marks on the map within the castle. However, it seems that the red marks don't necessarily represent adversaries."

"What do you mean?"

The sub-master sought clarification from the head of the Mage Division.

"It appears that the red marks indicate whether the individuals had negative feelings toward the Fairy Lord at that moment. It's not a permanent indication, and it can include temporary feelings of irritation."

"So, it's not as useful as the initial advance party had anticipated?"

"That's correct."

I see. So, the map is handy for the Fairy Lord but not as effective for us humans as initially thought. Upon further consideration, it makes sense. If a mysterious being suddenly appeared and could display the kingdom's adversaries, it would be odd if it was designed with an assumption of support for the kingdom.

"Nevertheless, as long as the Fairy Lord remains friendly to the kingdom, individuals marked in red are likely to be considered as adversaries to the kingdom. We should proceed with caution, but investigations into those marked in red should be conducted."

"Understood."

The sub-master responded to the princess's instructions.

We're almost at the royal castle, so I suppose this round of discussions is coming to an end. Duster thanked the Fairy Lord. Come to think of it, Duster was here too...

Oh no, I'm not looking forward to the upcoming audience or the party. But there are still significant matters left to address.

I haven't told the guild master that I'm going to make them step down as guild master yet!

# Chapter 104 - Friction

“That girl as the sub-master... Senior, can you really accept it?”

One of the junior receptionists asked me, the most senior receptionist, this question.

“She has strong recommendations from headquarters. Whether I accept it or not, her appointment as sub-master is confirmed. She may be the newest among the receptionists, but she has been working hard for two years. We should cooperate and complement each other’s strengths.”

“I understand that, but...”

While most of the adventurers and several guild staff were away dealing with the Stampede on the outskirts, a Stampede occurred in the capital. Coincidentally, the sub-master was also absent, and a new receptionist named Lysty swiftly took charge and established a defense system. She may be a newcomer, but she’s been around for two years, and she was the only receptionist hired after the previous ones. Furthermore, the Stampede on the outskirts turned out to be false information, leaving the experienced expedition team with no accomplishments.

Naturally, there was dissatisfaction among the experienced adventurers. They likely felt they could have handled it better.

Rather than considering it an achievement of the newcomers, it was viewed as an achievement of the Fairy Lord, despite the Fairy Lord not being present at the scene.

“Yeah, yeah. At the very least, those who stayed in the capital have no right to complain. She’s the one who brought the capital group together.”

It’s understandable that those who were absent during the expedition would feel dissatisfied. However, I can’t comprehend why there’s also

discontent among those who remained in the capital and didn't achieve much.

"Woo-hoo, we're back!"

"It took a while, didn't it?"

"But hey, we get paid just for being on the ship. It's an easy job."

"That's not quite right!"

Adventurers who had participated in the expedition and then joined the parade returned to the guild. Since the expedition was treated as an emergency request, they received upfront participation rewards, and there were no additional rewards since the Stampede didn't occur. In other words, there was no reason for them to return to the guild, but it seems to be a sort of habit.

"But still, seeing only the newcomers getting an audience with the king, that doesn't sit right with me."

"Absolutely!"

The adventurers who had just returned were part of the expedition and were not granted an audience with the king. It seems that dissatisfaction is brewing even among them. That girl who was suddenly made sub-master will have a tough time ahead.

"However, Duster became a hero, huh?"

"Yeah, the moment I saw that statue of Duster in the square, I almost burst out laughing!"

"Yes, yes. But coming back to the guild doesn't mean they're here just to chit-chat, right? There are plenty of requests piling up while many adventurers were absent. Please channel the pent-up frustration from

the Stampede into your next jobs.”

I prompt the adventurers to take on tasks before the atmosphere sours any further. There are indeed requests waiting to be handled.

“Oh, flower petal collection, is it?”

“Those flower petals from the parade? It’s pretty harsh to make us clean up after we’re all worn out.”

You’re talking about the flower petals that rained down during the parade, right? I saw them too, and they were incredibly beautiful. When those falling petals caught the sunlight, they shimmered in seven different colors. Upon closer inspection, the petals were primarily a pale pink. It seems that the paper confetti thrown by the parade spectators somehow transformed into these flower petals, likely due to the influence of the Fairy Lord.

In the capital, whenever there’s an unusual occurrence, it’s almost always attributed to the Fairy Lord. Items or phenomena with ties to the Fairy Lord are generally considered to have positive effects, so this petal collection task was

requested by the Commercial Guild. For newcomers who still don’t have proper equipment for fighting monsters, it will be a good source of income.

“And here, it’s a request for Troll fur collection?”

“Trolls, huh? They’re a bit too tough.”

This one is also a request from the Commercial Guild. They want to mass-produce dolls resembling the Fairy Lord, and they need Troll fur for the hair. These trolls have green fur covering their bodies. In addition to their high defense, they also possess regenerative abilities, making them formidable opponents for casual adventurers.

“Oh, is this about dealing with bandits? Alright, I’ll sweep them away

in place of the Stampede!”

“Yeah, bandit extermination. We’ll take care of what we can in place of the Stampede!”

“Don’t get carried away and get swept away yourselves.”

“Shut up!”

This is a request from the royal castle. They want to eliminate the bandits who have been causing disruptions and cutting off communication between the capital and the south. They want to remove this obstacle as quickly as possible.

However, I can’t help but feel dissatisfied with the recent events, especially the Stampede. It was orchestrated by the former Duke of Bastille in the north, driven by his desire for royal power. If it weren’t for the Fairy Lord, the capital would likely have been devastated.

But why did he want royal power when the capital was on the verge of destruction? Furthermore, the diversion to the south is also puzzling. If he had falsely claimed the Stampede occurred in the north, there would have been no need to place bandits in the south.

In fact, the means by which he artificially triggered the Stampede remain unknown. However, the investigation request has not yet been issued to the Adventurer’s Guild. Does the royal castle have knowledge of how the Stampede was artificially induced? Or perhaps, even if they don’t know, do they believe it’s something the Adventurer’s Guild shouldn’t find out?

In reality, I have a feeling that this incident is far from over.

# Chapter 105 - Expectations

“...it shall be done.”

“Ah, understood.”

Wait, is that it? Sabmas delivering the news to the Guildmaster about stepping down as Guildmaster and the reaction seems surprisingly nonchalant. Well, I guess getting angry here wouldn't help.

“Why that expression...”

The Guildmaster looks at me and says. Uh-oh, I might have shown more on my face than I thought.

“Well, to be honest, I had anticipated this. Considering what happened this time, if someone doesn't take responsibility on the Adventurer's Guild side, there would be a problem. It's about determining who will be responsible within the guild.”

“I see...”

While waiting in the luxurious waiting room usually used by nobles when meeting the King, we discussed the matter. We had been attending the parade and ended up coming to the castle for an audience with the King. The room is incredibly fancy, as expected of the room used by nobles.

In this setting, Sabmas finally conveyed the matter of Guildmaster transition to the current Guildmaster. Though I say

“finally,” there hasn't been a suitable time to bring it up until now. The Guildmaster seems to understand and accept it, so one of my lingering concerns has been resolved.



“So, I’m thinking of asking you, Guildmaster, to become the instructor for training new recruits.”

Sabmas says this while looking toward the adjacent waiting room. In this room, it’s just the Guildmaster, Sabmas, Duster, Archer Indy, and myself. Most of the veteran adventurers who fought in the defense of the capital are in another room, separated for the sake of confidentiality.

By the way, before we were led into this room, we were made to change our clothes, even given dresses for the audience.

If I were to tear this dress, it would be troublesome. I’ve heard that a different dress is prepared for the evening party, so I suppose the kingdom’s finances aren’t as dire as I thought.

“No, please let me decline.”

“I see...”

The Guildmaster rejects the proposal to become an instructor for new adventurers, and Sabmas looks disappointed.

“Don’t look so down. You know, thanks to the Fairy Lord, an old injury of mine has healed. I was considering returning to active duty.”

“Huh? Guildmaster, you’re planning to return to active duty? So, that means I’ll be the Guildmaster, and you’ll be just another adventurer?”

I wasn’t very enthusiastic about becoming the Guildmaster, but if it means I can boss the Guildmaster around starting tomorrow, it doesn’t sound so bad now.

“You’re beaming, aren’t you? I can understand what you’re thinking, but I’m sorry to disappoint you. I plan to head west for a while. I’ll be absent from the capital for some time.”

“Huh? Why?”

Right now, the kingdom has finally started to recover after years of decline, and there are plenty of requests coming in.

Moreover, many adventurers were away in the borderlands, so requests have been piling up even more. For adventurers, the current situation in the capital is a golden opportunity for earnings.

“Regardless of the reason, replacing the Guildmaster won’t be taken lightly. Adventurers can’t afford to be underestimated. I’ll be heading to Eneria until things cool down. I want to see what it’s like in the great magic nation.”

“I see.”

It’s going to be a bit lonely when the Guildmaster, who’s been such a prominent figure, is gone. He was a mood maker in some ways, after all. It makes sense that he chose Eneria as his destination. To the east is an enemy nation, to the south, there are mountains to cross, so by process of elimination, the only option is Eneria to the west.

“More than me, it might be tougher on all of you. The Adventurers’ Guild has maintained a policy of non-interference in the conflicts between nations, but this time, with the existence of an insider among the adventurers and the involvement forced upon us, we can’t remain completely uninvolved. However, as long as the Fairy Lord is here, the future doesn’t look too bleak.”

“But, wouldn’t it be better if the Fairy Lord just used their incredible magic to defeat the Empire right away?”

Not only a master strategist who predicts various things in advance but also a powerful force capable of taking down two individuals with ease. The Fairy Lord can pretty much do anything.

“The castle’s side wouldn’t do that. They’ll refrain from using the Fairy Lord like that. If the Fairy Lord suddenly took out the Empire, it would be a serious breach of the balance of power between nations. Imagine if the Fairy Lord defeated the Empire with their powers. What do you think would happen?”

“Huh? Peace would prevail, and that’s it, right?”

“No. Other neighboring nations would suspect that the Kingdom might attack them next, and they would cast a watchful eye on the Kingdom. If, at some point, the surrounding nations decided to unite and attack the Kingdom, there’s no guarantee that the Fairy Lord would still be on our side.”

“I see... It’s true that relying too much on such overwhelming power could create more problems.”

“It’s precisely because the Fairy Lord has tremendous power that they have to be careful how they use it. The Fairy Lord understands that and wants to maintain the balance. We need to preserve the trust we’ve built.”

I see, it’s complicated. The Fairy Lord isn’t just a powerful entity; they have their own reasons and motivations. We’ve relied on them greatly, but it’s essential to remember that they have their own concerns and principles too.

“Empire and further east, there are many nations looking to expand westward, so if the Empire disappears, the next target could be the Kingdom. Furthermore, with the Empire’s history of territorial expansion through conquest, there’s a very high likelihood that the indigenous people of those conquered lands might incite conflicts.”

“I see.”

So, even if we take down the Empire, there will always be another threat. It’s not a straightforward decision. It’s complicated.

“By the way, do we get anything for this upcoming audience?”

“You, seriously... Well, it’s you.”

I had been curious about this for a while. Would we receive any

rewards for what we've done? This seemed like the right time to ask, but I ended up getting a very exasperated look in return.

"Oh, I was... asked for my opinion in advance."

Duster-san spoke up unusually!

"Of course, you're the star of today! What did they ask, and what did you answer?"

"...A title or a precious sword. I chose the sword."

"Wow, that's the ultimate two choices! Going with the sword, what a true adventurer!"

Normally, it's a no-brainer to pick the title since it sets you up for a comfortable life. But adventurers always seem to have a fascination with swords and weaponry.

"The castle side also had quite a dilemma when it came to rewards this time."

Submaster offered additional information. I wonder where Submaster always gets his information. I hope I can handle that role.

"Duster-san's achievement is of a level rarely seen in human history, so it couldn't be rewarded lightly. However, the castle didn't have any treasures that matched the magnitude of this achievement. So, one of the Fairy Swords will be given to him."

"What!? You mean the Fairy Sword you used to mow down those Imperial soldiers!? Wow, that's amazing!"

"It's the Earth attribute one, which has the most straightforward ability among the five. When you swing the sword, rocks are launched. Unlike other swords, this effect can be partially replicated with a sling or something similar, which is why they decided it was

acceptable. Still, it must have been a tough decision.”

“Wow, that’s impressive.”

“Also, the Chief Mage, despite his achievements, was responsible for overlooking the Empire’s spy within the Mage Corps for many years. So, his successes and failures balanced out, and he won’t face any rewards or punishments.”

“Wow, that’s a bit tough for him, isn’t it? He put his dignity on the line...”

“Hahaha, let’s not touch that subject.”

“So, what about us?”

“On behalf of the entire Adventurers’ Guild, the Guildmaster will be honored.”

“Oh... okay.”

It’s what I expected. I was a bit hopeful after all the fuss during the parade and getting to wear such a beautiful dress, but, well, it’s as I thought.

“I knew it, but...”

“However, to maintain a balance, since the Adventurers’ Guild’s headquarters only issued a reprimand to the Guildmaster, there was neither reward nor punishment. And, they will reduce the guild’s taxes a bit.”

“I see.”

I knew it. Personally, I don’t get anything. I was briefly hopeful,

though.

“Do you understand now?”

# Chapter 106 - Escape

“Have you found the Fairy Lady?”

“No, she hasn’t been found yet.”

“That damn... \*sigh\*.”

...The Fairy Lady suddenly disappearing is not uncommon. Thanks to her, the kingdom has been saved from destruction.

The Fairy Lady seems to act capriciously, but she must have a well-thought-out plan for her actions. It’s not as if she vanished without thinking. I need to stay calm.

\*Sigh...\*

If the maids couldn’t find her, does that mean she managed to leave the castle?

“Tires, we’ll be moving to the audience chamber. The Fairy Lady is absent, but the audience will proceed. It’s likely her absence is her way of declining the reward.”

“Understood.”

This decision comes from Mother, who has the best understanding of the Fairy Lady’s movements in this castle. The noble and noble-hearted Fairy Lady probably didn’t want to be tied down by material rewards like titles. She might have wanted to avoid potential entanglements with the kingdom.

“However, her absence at tonight’s party is a problem. Expand the search radius to the town, and if possible, bring her back before the start of the party.”

“Understood.”

The maid who received instructions exits. They’re probably going to organize a search party for the Fairy Lady. But finding someone as whimsical as her won’t be easy. The Second Knight Order is unavailable due to the audience, so we’ll have to mobilize the town’s guards or the servants of the castle.

“You’ll be quite busy at tonight’s party too. Many nobles who previously had no chance to approach you will be trying to get close.”

“That’s true. If I keep everyone at arm’s length, there shouldn’t be a problem.”

I’ve managed to get by without forming connections with the nobility so far. If they’re suddenly trying to cozy up to me, it’s likely they have ulterior motives. I don’t see any reason to engage with such nobles.

“No, don’t completely isolate yourself. If you do, the dissatisfaction among the nobility will fester somewhere, and it could be exploited by the Empire. Maintain some connections with the Fairy Lady—moderate ones. Have you reviewed the list of individuals I provided the other day?”

“Yes.”

Another difficult request. I’ve only maintained minimal social interactions until now. But if we want to protect the kingdom in the future, I can’t neglect these aspects. I’ll have to do my best.

“Furthermore, you will host a tea party at a later date. You should make friends with young ladies of your age. It will help you build alliances for the future when you might leave the royal family and marry.”

“...I understand.”



Lately, people around me have described me as hot-headed, prone to aggression, and prioritizing martial solutions. I might need to reflect on these perceptions.

I wonder if I'll be able to engage in conversations at a tea party with young ladies of my age. I should practice conversing with them before the actual event, but finding someone suitable for such convenient practice...

There's one person.

# Chapter 107 - Spectacle

It seems like the main event with the Booze Man is over, which means I'm no longer needed after the parade. Today is the festival's main day, so the town should be livelier than usual. I do want to go to the town, but I'm also curious about the Booze Man's audience with the king.

I've had an audience before, but it ended so quickly that I barely understood what was happening. However, this time, I think the king will reward the Booze Man for his accomplishments. I'm really curious about what the Booze Man will receive.

If I were to make a safe guess, it might be a medal or something similar. Personally, I'd love it if a Hero's Sword appeared, and the Booze Man, after receiving it, embarked on an adventurous journey like in an RPG. But maybe it'll be a title or something unconventional.

So, I've hidden myself near the ceiling of the audience chamber. There's a kind of fake second floor in the audience chamber, like a balcony, even though it's not a real second floor. It would be too cramped for an average person, but I can easily hide here.

There are quite a few bugs around, and there are spiderwebs too, but strangely, I don't feel repulsed at all. I look tiny, and the bugs appear huge, but I'm not scared. Maybe it's because of the Fairy's effect.

From an insect's perspective, fairies are probably like forest companions, and from a fairy's perspective, insects might be considered friendly creatures. At this size, insects seem surprisingly furry.

I've been playing with the bugs for a while when soldiers holding flags and soldiers with trumpets lined up on both sides of the audience chamber. Then, nobles began gathering sporadically and stood along the back wall. I guess they'll be standing room spectators. When I had my audience, there weren't any spectators like this.

Afterward, a fanfare played, and the large doors of the audience chamber opened. Knights or knight-like people walked in on a red carpet. Following them, the Booze Man and his group of adventurer pals, all dressed like nobles, came in. The adventurers all dressed up nicely, but the Buff Guy stood out in an amusing way.

By the way, I've taken off the dress and left it in my room. I'm currently wearing the default dress I started with. It probably only has a defense rating of about 5.

The music changed, and an old guy beside the throne shouted something loud, probably something like "His Majesty the King." Then, the King and the Queen, who always had a Royal Straight Flush-like expression, the cool-looking blond guy I haven't seen recently, and the silver-haired girl, arrived. Are these all the royal family members in this castle?

The King and the Queen sat on the throne. The blond guy and the silver-haired girl stood on either side. Oh no, our eyes met. I've been spotted, but well, there's no reason for them to get mad. Silver-Haired Girl always finds me quickly. It seems the Queen also noticed.

The audience began with the King saying something, and then other people began speaking as well. Oops, I'm getting sleepy. It's a medieval fantasy event, so I thought I'd enjoy it more, but it feels like a school assembly. When the principal is speaking...

Huh!? I fell asleep.

Um... Oh, the Booze Man is about to receive something. Is that the sword I made? The gem on the hilt is brown, not red, so it's a replica I made. I didn't think it was in the treasure vault; I must have left it here.

I made it mainly for appearance, so I doubt it's of any use in combat. It's more like a decorative sword. I wonder if it's okay to give that as a reward. It's like a ceremonial sword.

Anyway, the King looks terrified as he hands it over... Is he afraid of

swords or something? Even though it's not like waving a sword around will make heads roll, he seems overly nervous. Maybe he's not used to handling blades.

Now, it seems the audience is almost over. I wonder how long I was asleep... Oh, the adventurers are leaving, and then the knight-like people. The noble spectators are also leaving through a different exit. Alright, time for me to head to the town!

Huh!?

Silver-Haired Girl shouted something, and a bunch of soldiers rushed over here!? Uh-oh, this looks like a flag for getting scolded! But today is the only day for the festival! I can't let a lecture consume this day!

When I arrived in the town, the soldiers were already waiting for me in full force! The townsfolk were cheering as they watched me being chased by the soldiers. Wait, are they betting on this chase?

What's going on here!?

## **Chapter 108 - That's a Hoot**

Yep, I got caught, alright.

But it's not like I lost, okay? I mean, if I kept running around like that, I might've caused an accident. Honestly, if I wanted to escape seriously, I could just fly up into the sky. But then I wouldn't get to enjoy the festival.

So, after being brought back to the castle, I was made to wear a dress again. It's primarily in soothing shades of blue, with the large, billowing skirt part being a yellowish white. It even comes with a hat and a necklace. Wow. It must have been quite a task to make this tiny necklace at the cultural level of this country.

And then, off to the party. A party, huh? If they had told me earlier, I would have attended instead of trying to escape! I wouldn't have

understood what they were saying, but still.

It seems to be a standing reception style. People pick up their food from a large central table and then gather around the smaller round tables scattered around. It doesn't seem to be a dance party since the central table occupies the space.

The ceiling features a huge chandelier-like thing, but unlike Earth chandeliers, these don't have candles; they glow with magic. Maybe that's why their shapes are quite different from typical chandeliers. This super-sized chandelier in this venue is more like a classic-modern mirror ball with a gentle glow than a chandelier. It's a super fancy ceiling light hanging there.

The light source isn't just the super-sized chandelier, though; there are magical lighting fixtures along the walls of the corridor-like hallways. Perhaps it's thanks to these side sources of light that there's no complete darkness under the tables.

Still, compared to a brightly lit room on modern-day Earth, it's definitely on the dimmer side.

The interior decorations are lavish and stylish. While there are some flowers, there are more metallic elements, and everything sparkles. Even the plates on which the food is served aren't just arranged; they come with tea stands or are tiered like stairs, emphasizing aesthetics over functionality. The dishes on display seem to prioritize vibrant, high-saturation colors over delectability. The first impression is more about beauty than tastiness.

There's quite a crowd here. About 10% are adventurers, and you can tell they're not used to this environment even though they're wearing fancy clothes. Another 10% or so are knights. The rest are mostly nobles, and it looks like there are quite a few noble families attending with their children.

Lined up along the walls are butlers and maids who can respond immediately if needed. They're arranged like this to avoid blocking the light from the lighting fixtures, so it goes like maid, lighting fixture, maid, lighting fixture, butler, lighting fixture, maid, lighting

fixture... That kind of arrangement.

One thing I can't overlook is the cake. There's cake! It's not a cream cake; it's more like sponge cake, but cake is cake. I hadn't seen one until now, so I wondered if cakes just didn't exist in this country.

Now then, let's enjoy the party! Or so I thought, but instead of entering the party hall, I was led to another room. What? A map? Again? Is there something wrong?

The usual royal family members and important people are looking at a map and discussing something. Are they going to play Red and Blue again? In other words, even among the nobles, there might be a thief? Nobles doing that? Hmm, I don't get it. Perhaps there's a noble with sticky fingers, and every time they host a party, something goes missing. That aside, the people who are always with the king seem quite young; maybe they're ministers or something.

And finally, I made it to the party venue! I entered with the royal family. Escort? I doubt anyone here can escort someone as tiny as me. Of course, I just floated in on my own.

There's a small table and chairs set up in the corner of the royal family's table. Tables on top of tables, it's a bit strange.

Am I supposed to sit here? What about the food? Can I go get some? No? Oh well.

As I sat there, nobles came by one by one to greet me. I smiled no matter what they said. Never nod. You see, with nobles, once you start nodding, you don't know what they might demand from you.

Handling nobles with children is quite easy. If you just show some friendliness to their kids, they tend to retreat happily.

It's a win-win situation with the kids smiling and satisfied. What's really troublesome is dealing with solo guests, especially those who keep expecting reactions from me.

But I figured out a good way to handle them. I just glance at Her Majesty the Queen. Then, she gazes at them with a smile that doesn't quite look like a smile, with an intense and commanding expression. Once they experience that, they tend to withdraw reluctantly.

A quick glance, Her Majesty! Reluctantly retreating. Another glance, Her Majesty! Still reluctantly retreating.

After exchanging greetings, there was one child-noble who became strangely hyper. They probably liked fanciful things like fairies. I got a bit scared when they closed their eyes and started praying, but afterward, they cried and seemed delighted.

Finally, after finishing the greetings with the nobles, it was time for dinner. No adventurers came to greet me this time.

Oh, no need for regular dishes. I want cake, please! Cake, please! You don't need that; I have a limited capacity, so there's no room for cake. That's it, right there! Yes, that!

One of the birdcage maids brought me a small piece of cake. Alright... um... this is... it's definitely sponge cake, and if I were human-sized, I might have enjoyed it...

But there are these big holes in it! No, the lack of fluffiness is making it unbearable! You see, the fluffy texture of a cake is largely due to those holes. When a human takes a bite, the holes get crushed, providing a cushion-like effect. But at my size, I end up nibbling on the walls of the holes, which results in no cushioning effect whatsoever.

Hmm... I had a feeling, but it seems like human-made food is structured for creatures around human size. At least when it comes to texture, I feel like there are a lot of dishes that don't work for creatures much bigger or smaller.

There are layers, and fruits are sandwiched in between; that doesn't work either. A human could probably bite into both layers along with

the fruits in between, and it would be delicious, right? But at my size, I have no choice but to eat the upper and lower layers separately. It's not a fruit-filled cake; it's cake and fruit.

However, the taste is good. It's sweet. There's a peculiar sweetness added to the sponge cake, and it's delicious. Even though there's no fluffiness, if you think of it as a soft cookie, it's quite good. The fruits in the middle are awkwardly sliced too thinly, making them hard to eat individually, but the berry flavors are enjoyable. It's definitely edible. I give it a thumbs-up to eat later.

While I was contemplating all of this and munching on the cake, they started serving tea to all the guests. It looks like some kind of herbal tea with floating flower petals. The petals change color depending on the lighting; it sometimes looks pink but occasionally appears purple.

Hmm? Could it be that these are the same petals I turned into confetti during the parade? No way. They wouldn't just drink unknown flower petals that were originally made of paper, even with the king and nobles present. It must be a regular herbal tea in this world, right? I don't know, though. Even if it upsets their stomachs.

Oh, you're giving me some too? Thanks. But there are no flower petals floating in my cup, right? Well, yeah, that makes sense. My cup is too small for flower petals.

The color is a deep red. It reminds me of rose hips or something similar. The scent is like chamomile or maybe something like mint or peppermint... a herbal fragrance, but sweeter.

Alright, let's see how it tastes... It tastes like grass. Yep, definitely grass. It's like the taste of falling face-first into the grass on a hot summer afternoon in the park. The earthy flavor, which you wouldn't expect from the regal reddish color,

feels like wormwood green. Adventurers might like this, but is it really okay to serve this to nobles and the royal family? I thought as I looked up...

Oh wow, there's a crying noble!



Yeah, I guess grass juice is a no-go!

# Chapter 109 - United As One

In recent years, it's quite unusual for a party hosted by the royal family to be held, so I, a noble of the Northern Union, was also invited.

Despite this party celebrating the rare achievement in human history of a bloodless defense through a Stampede, the only ones truly reveling in it here are the adventurers.

Currently, my family is in a precarious situation.

The Northern Union, also known as the Bastille Faction, primarily occupies the areas north of the Bastille territories along the major river that divides the kingdom into north and south.

The Duke of Bastille used the establishment of customs along the riverbanks north of the Bastille territories, where the major river flows into a port town between the capital and the river's end, to bring together the noble families from the northern riverbank territories. This situation forced many to become the Duke of Bastille's vassals. Any attempt to affiliate with other factions or to remain neutral would result in an immediate halt to the logistics of goods via the river in their territories. Thus, the Duke of Bastille wielded considerable influence as the guardian of the entire northern region.

However, the Duke of Bastille was captured, and the dissolution of their house was confirmed. Officially, it is said that they were captured for causing the Stampede artificially. Still, unless someone is entirely ignorant of information, every noble should be aware of their connections to the Empire. Furthermore, though no one openly says it, it is widely known that the Empire directly invaded the royal capital. With the Duke of Bastille's house gone, the balance among the nobles is disrupted.

While the central and southern regions, as well as some parts of the west, anticipate prosperity due to the arrival of the fairies, the other areas remain plagued by poor harvests. Although the recent rain has

raised hopes for a better harvest than the previous year, discord had already emerged at this point. The eastern region had been granted preferential treatment as a defense line against the Empire, but this had also contributed to the overall discord.

The unluckiest of all are the northern territories, specifically those along the riverbank, which belong to the Northern Union. They have not benefited from the increased harvest due to the fairies, nor have they received the preferential treatment of the east. Moreover, they suffered greatly from the recent resurgence of the twin gods' reversed flow. To make matters worse, the dissolution of the Bastille family adds to their woes.

The Bastille territories have been divided into two, with two newly appointed knights from the Second Order governing each part. This is an arrangement where military officials have been placed in key positions of the predominantly civilian Northern Union.

There are no absentees among the Northern Union's nobles. They are aware that they are suspected of having connections to the Empire. Not attending would practically be an admission of guilt. However, even from my perspective, there are those I find suspicious, so there may still be insiders among them.

The royal family probably doesn't have the means to immediately identify the insiders, but this party may be their way of attempting to weed out any remaining ones. While other factions are gathering with the goal of getting closer to the fairies, the Northern Union seems to be here for an interrogation.

Furthermore, it seems that the Southern Border Marquis, whose territory was used as a diversion this time, doesn't hold favorable feelings toward the Northern Union.

Among those from regions other than the North, it seems that most nearby nobles are in attendance. It's quite rare to decline an invitation to a party hosted by the royal family. However, due to the short notice of the event, many nobles from distant areas are absent.

Nevertheless, the East is unique in that it plays a significant role in border defense, and major nobles from there have also mostly attended. The Empire has made significant moves, and discussions related to defense are likely taking place.

In this complicated gathering where various motivations intertwine, adventurers are also in attendance. What's striking is that these adventurers, clearly newcomers, are not the seasoned veterans who can navigate the social intricacies and avoid causing trouble. They cast curious glances at things they are not accustomed to. Thankfully, there don't seem to be any foolish or disrespectful actions, but there are certainly nobles who don't hide their discomfort.

Adding to this chaotic situation are the fairies, an entity that will inevitably become a significant factor in the kingdom's future. Their power, achievements, and influence in repelling the Empire and the Stampede are immeasurable.

Moreover, in terms of commerce, fairy-related goods are trending. In the fashion-conscious noble society, not possessing fairy-related merchandise is seen as falling behind. It's like having a money tree. Everyone here probably wishes to bring one home, provided they are not under the royal family's protection.

After the royal family's entrance, greetings between the nobility and the royalty commence. Nobles aim to get closer to the fairies, while the royal family seeks to identify any infiltrators.

The Western Border Marquis brought his daughter along for the greetings. She had gone blind a few years ago, and there was no hope of recovery, attributed to events at the western border. Even I had heard the rumors. Perhaps out of desperation, he brought her, hoping that the fairies might heal her.

And it seems that when his daughter offered a prayer by the fairies, she regained her sight. From a distance, it's not entirely clear, but the sheer joy on her face is unmistakable. Whether she genuinely recovered or if it's a staged performance orchestrated by the royal family to enhance the value of the fairies, I cannot confirm. However, the nobles from the Northern Union, who are already under suspicion,

dare not act rashly.

As the party reaches its later stages, tea with floating petals is served to everyone. While red tea is not particularly uncommon, the scent is unfamiliar. The petals themselves are like nothing I've seen before. They change colors under the illumination, suggesting that these are not the typical petals in circulation. At least, they aren't common in the North. The fact that they're introduced at this timing raises questions about whether the fairies are involved.

Upon tasting it, a strong herbal flavor initially dominates. However, the effect of the floating petals seems to envelop the mouth in a sweet fragrance, creating a very relaxing sensation. It's less like tea you'd normally drink and more akin to medicinal brew.

Drinking this, one can feel their previous worries dissipating like a bad dream. This is a matter of national significance.

We must unite as a nation to confront the Empire. My family has not colluded with the Empire. There's no need to agonize. The first step is to dispel any suspicions and then plan our future actions collectively. It's evident that war will break out during the Garm period.

In a refreshed mood, I raise my head to look around, and I see someone in tears. They are all nobles from the Northern Union. Even from my perspective, there are individuals with dubious connections to the Empire among them. So, this tea... that's what it's about. The royal family has shown that they have a means to smoke out infiltrators at this timing.

I see. The power of the fairies is genuine. The Empire has certainly found itself in quite an unexpected situation. Although they are the enemy, I can't help but pity them.

However, from the perspective of the kingdom, it's a delightful turn of events.

# Chapter 110 - Resist

“Regarding this herbal tea, it only has a relaxation effect,”

The apothecaries inquired about the petals that the fairies had showcased in their parade.

“Normally, that’s correct. Her Highness the Princess also had some, didn’t she?”

“Indeed, it did give a comforting feeling, but...”

According to them, the relaxation effect of the herbal tea was not due to the petals but rather because it was originally designed as a relaxing herbal tea.

However, it’s apparently extremely unpalatable. The unfortunate herbal tea with a relaxation effect had its taste ruined by its unpleasantness. It might be more accurate to call it medicine rather than herbal tea. Adding the petals of the fairies to it not only retains its efficacy but, strangely enough, improves the taste.

The Apothecaries Guild first tasted the collected petals as part of their analysis to determine if they could be turned into medicine. While it was undoubtedly a daring experiment, it seems reasonable to assume that the fairies wouldn’t spread something that would be harmful to the city. After they discovered that it had a pleasant taste, they decided to combine it with the medicine, which was effective but had a poor flavor.

“Then, what about that transformation?”

“Those petals seem to possess a mental resistance effect.”

“A mental resistance effect?”

“Yes, it seems to prevent or cure mental conditions caused by magic, curses, drugs, or toxins. For instance, confusion, extreme drowsiness, mental fatigue... and even brainwashing.”

“Brainwashing!?”

“What was that!?”

“So, are you saying that the Northern Union was brainwashed?”

The crowd around them began to stir. If the Empire had indeed gone so far as to brainwash the Northern Union to ensure the fall of the kingdom, it would be a grave matter.

“Oh no, I cannot say for sure. I’m merely talking about the potential effects of these petals. Also, it seems to put people in a mood to do good deeds. We, the Apothecaries Guild, felt that these petals could be beneficial to the country, so we presented them. Hahaha.”

“I see, understood.”

It appeared that her Majesty would conclude the conversation.

“All of those petals were scattered throughout the city. Regulating their distribution is impossible. You may handle them as you see fit. I will inform the Commercial Guild to ensure they reach the domestic nobility. However, do not reveal the effect of countering brainwashing for now. It will eventually come to light, but for the time being, we can maintain an advantage by making it seem like the brainwashing hasn’t been undone.”

“Understood.”

“Furthermore, investigate how the brainwashing was done.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

With the discussion about the herbal tea concluded, the Prime Minister took the lead.

“Next, regarding the issue of the fairies’ preventive measures for the poor harvests due to Stampede... Lady Fairy, is it possible for you to make a round trip to the northern port town?”

When the Prime Minister inquired, the fairy hesitated for a moment before nodding. This would help maintain the appearance that the royal family didn’t have exclusive access to the fairy.

“Thank you. This year, there’s not much time until the harvest, and we’re preoccupied with Imperial countermeasures.

Therefore, the rounds will be limited to the north. However, in the following years, there’s a possibility of visiting other regions as well. Is that acceptable?”

The fairy nodded. While it appeared to be a hasty agreement, one would assume there were various calculations going on in the fairy’s mind. With this agreement, they had secured a commitment for the fairy to stay in the capital at least until the rounds to various regions in the next year.

“Thank you. The Empire is also undoubtedly keeping a close eye on you now. While the Empire’s attention is drawn to the north due to your presence there, we will move to control the underground passages. That’s all. Does anyone else have anything to add?”

...No one made a move.

“Then, this meeting is adjourned.”



# Chapter 111 - Brave

I woke up in the morning and emerged from the dark cage covered by dark curtains. There it was, just like always.

“Oh wow! It’s the personal doll!!”

Why is it here? Wasn’t it supposed to be sent to storage? Well, on closer inspection, it seems quite new. Maybe it was replaced with a new one instead of being repaired.

Hmm, there’s no glowing stone, the power source I used to have on its chest. No indentations for it either. I also remember some cracks on its face, but there doesn’t seem to be any sign of repair. It must be a new version.

As I pondered this, the maid with the birdcage and the apprentice maid arrived. They were both looking at me with a somewhat heartwarming expression. Is it cute to see a lovely fairy and a fairy doll playing together? Objectively speaking, it’s quite a fancy scene.

Or perhaps it’s like the feeling you get when you see a pet dog playing with a stuffed animal? Would they be happy if I held the doll and played around? Well, I won’t do that. After all, this doll is creepy.

Afterward, just like any other day, the maid with the birdcage prepared breakfast, and the apprentice maid helped me get ready for the day. What was different today happened after breakfast.

Boom!

A guy with a huge smile, golden hair, and the energy of a high school student, like if you combined the cheerfulness of the golden-haired guy and the silver-haired girl, burst into the room. He must be royalty, probably from the resemblance to the golden-haired guy and the silver-haired girl.

His smile was so bright it could blind you. I bet royalties say that teeth are their greatest asset. I wouldn't be surprised if his occupation said "Hero." He came into someone's room without permission, after all. And he continued as if he was about to start rummaging through the dresser... oh, he's coming this way!

Nooo, don't touch my head! It comes off! It comes off, I tell you! Stop poking my cheeks! I look like a creepy doll now!

What's with this guy? He's saying so many things with that smile, but I can't understand a word!

Unable to bear it, I phased through and escaped. Geez, my hair that the apprentice maid had just styled is all messed up now...

That guy is someone to be cautious of. He's probably royalty, but how many of them are there, really? I've never seen anyone like him before, but someone so lively couldn't have been at the castle unnoticed. So, maybe he returned to the castle recently, like yesterday? Probably on a white horse.

With the "Hero" attribute, maybe he just came back from a journey to defeat the Demon King? Was the recent festival a celebration for defeating the Demon King? Well, that would make it a party without the guest of honor.

If that's the case, he might be on his way to defeat the Demon King but heard that there's something like an event flag with a fairy in the castle, so he came back? In other words, am I the event flag? If they give me some item that seems relevant, will I set off on another journey?

But it's not that simple. At the very least, he should stop with the head poking for me to consider giving him an event item. Well, half of this is a joke, though. It seems quite peaceful here, and there's no atmosphere like the Demon King is taking over or anything.

That said, what should I do? Some sort of payback... hmm, mischief might be fun.

# Chapter 112 - West to East

“No, it does get lonely, you know. Do you have a handkerchief with you? If things get tough, you can come back anytime.”

“Are you my mother? You just got promoted from a newbie to submaster, so you probably have it tougher. Hang in there.”

It seems the guildmaster's transition is complete, as the former guildmaster is heading west today. They had a big farewell party last night, but it doesn't look like anyone is suffering from a hangover.

Me? I didn't participate. I heard it turned into a grand complaint session about the veteran members' grievances against the newcomers. If I had joined, I would have been squashed.

“Thank you. Here, this is a farewell gift.”

“Oh, thanks. What's this?”

“It's fairy tea. It's really popular among the nobles right now, and it's quite rare for the general public!”

A while ago, during the parade, the fairy petals offered by the Fairy Lady were collected by adventurers, guild employees, and members of the apothecary guild. They were dried and turned into herbal tea, and it became a huge hit among the nobility. Most of the petals, which were collected in pristine condition, have already been reserved for the nobles. For the general public, there might be a few that have been washed and are circulating, but even then, only wealthy people can get their hands on them.

The herbal tea served at the royal castle party simply had the petals floating on top, but fairy tea is made by brewing the dried petals themselves. The fairy tea I prepared this time was obtained with the help of the apothecary guild, and they prioritized the drying process.

It was quite a favor to ask, so this level of return is reasonable.

“Alright, this is the rumored fairy tea. I’ll try it once I arrive there.”

“Yes, it’s said to have a calming effect on the mind and is very relaxing. If you ever feel lonely there, please have some!”

“...You really have a way with words. Well then, see you later.”

“Yes, take care!”

I’m the only one seeing them off. The current guildmaster seems busy after the transition, and the veteran members who were under the former guildmaster have been drunk since last night’s farewell party.

The former guildmaster’s large back gradually disappears into the crowd as they head toward the western gate. Even someone that big can get lost in a crowd like this. Well, West, huh? It’s a friendly country, but I haven’t heard many good things about it. Well, with that person, it should be fine.

“Submaster, I need those documents, please.”

“Yes.”

“We’ve received a request from headquarters for this quarter’s target achievement rate report and next quarter’s target submission.”

“Got it. Target achievement numbers, total rewards per adventurer, and... hmm, I see. Let’s start by organizing this quarter’s information, and then we can create next quarter’s targets... Garm’s season, huh? Hmm, to wrap it up, please arrange the request forms for this season in chronological order. Oh, and separate them into completed, not completed, and not accepted categories.”

“Submaster, there’s a request for Troll fur collection that no one has taken... It’s just piling up.”

“Ah, Trolls are pretty tough, aren’t they? Don’t worry; I’ve got something in mind.”

Duster, a hero since then, still takes on requests for things like herb collection and light tasks every few days. He hasn’t even used the incredible sword he got from the king yet.

“Even though they’re not request board requests, taking two days off for every small request seems a bit excessive, doesn’t it?”

“Well... I’ve been working once every three days...”

Duster has been taking on requests like herb collection and light tasks every few days since becoming a hero. He got the Troll fur collection request too, but...

“...Isn’t it a bit far? It’s in the southeast forest, near the border...”

“That’s true; it’s quite far. However, we’ve also posted the request at the guild in the town over there, but no one’s taking it. Over there, essential livelihood requests take precedence, and requests for hobbies and entertainment get pushed to the back.”

“...Yeah, I suppose so. But even if it’s for hobbies and entertainment, couldn’t they just leave it...”

“No, it won’t do! It’s a request from the Commerce Guild, and there’s a request from the royal family behind it. I’ll be in trouble if you don’t take it. Think of it as helping out the new submaster! Come on, please!”

“...I understand.”

Phew, that was easy.

# Chapter 113 - Second Prince

“Ah, damn it, they got away again.”

I follow the small figure that’s slipping away from my grasp, like a slippery fish. That guy, he’s always eluding me.

“Crest, please refrain from rough handling of the Fairy Lady. It’s already a hassle to bring her to the council.”

“I understand, but Mother, you really look rejuvenated now. I think people might actually believe it if we introduce you as my sister.”

During the few years when I was stationed at the eastern border, the capital, which had been quite stagnant, seems to have experienced various changes in the past quarter.

First, there was the news that fairies had visited the capital and cured Mother’s illness. Then, it was revealed that it wasn’t an illness but a curse, affecting not only Mother but the former prime minister as well. I thought this news was a sign that the capital had fallen into such a decline that it was resorting to the occult.

Furthermore, a series of events followed in rapid succession: the arrival of rain, the end of the drought, the resumption of trade, the border Stampede, the capital Stampede, an attack on the royal castle by the empire, all of which were resolved without bloodshed, and an invitation to a victory celebration. Each of these events involved fairies. Damn it, it’s such an interesting period, and I missed out on it being stationed in the middle of nowhere.

If you ask for more details, it gets even more interesting. A fairy sword that shoots magic with a swing, a potion that can fully heal even from the brink of death, a necklace that allows you to blast the magic training grounds into smithereens, and fruits that make you superhuman when you eat them. Such convenient items don’t even appear in fairy tales. Dolls that shine brightly and charge into imperial soldiers with deafening roars, the ideas are out of this world. Truly

fitting for fairies, their way of thinking is unlike humans.

I actually wanted to return to the royal castle much earlier, but I couldn't leave my post as a key figure in the east when the major nobles were attending the party.

"It seems your Highness has not gained the favor of the Fairy Lady."

"Is that so? True, whenever I try to catch her, she escapes, but she seems to be sticking around quite a bit. She was looking this way for a long time just now."

"No, I believe that was merely caution on her part."

"Hmm, she's quite the elusive one, like a cat."

Come to think of it, that fairy was brought here by Tires, wasn't she? I'd like to ask where and how he found her in detail, but... that seems impossible for now.

"Please calm down. Let's get to the main topic."

"Understood."

"Well then..."

Following Mother's words, a man starts moving. Hmm, so this is the new prime minister, I presume. His reputation is neither great nor terrible; he seems to be managing the turbulent present quite well. He must have inherited some of the talent from my father, the former prime minister. He spreads out several sheets of paper. This is... a blueprint? No, it looks more like a map?

"This is a map of underground tunnels, modeled after the Fairy Lady's map. This large paper is an overhead view of the entire layout. The black lines represent the underground tunnels, and the faint blue lines indicate major surface structures.

To illustrate the upper and lower structure of the underground tunnels, overlapping sections are depicted as dashed lines, with the lower one having wider dashes.”

The prime minister spreads out a notably large piece of parchment for explanation. It’s not your usual sheepskin parchment but one made from the hide of a large creature. It’s quite precious, but it must be worth using it. The map is quite intricate. I wonder what the original fairy map looks like?

“Using this map, we will conduct a comprehensive survey of the underground tunnels starting in three days. The objectives are to locate any remaining imperial soldiers and confirm the entry points.”

According to prior information, imperial soldiers have entered the royal castle through the underground tunnels. It’s believed that the soldiers entered from the sewer side since a part of the tunnel’s wall was demolished, connecting it to the capital’s underground sewer system. The imperial soldiers probably entered from the sewer side, but the underground tunnels and the sewer system are both ancient, and their overall structures remain unclear. So, a survey team will be dispatched. Of course, I’ll be participating. It sounds interesting!

“These sheets are partial maps. Each survey team, divided into six groups, will be provided with maps of their respective assigned sections.”

The prime minister hands out maps to the leaders of each team. I also receive one.

“Two teams will begin the survey from the underground sections of the royal castle, splitting into the underground tunnel investigation and sewer investigation. Three teams will start their investigations from the capital’s underground sewer.

The remaining team will check for any overlooked entrances within the capital and its vicinity without directly entering the sewer.”

Each team’s movements are explained, but we’ve already received prior communication about this. No one questions or raises doubts.



“The survey period will be five days. You won’t need to stay underground continuously; please take breaks as necessary.

Timing is at the discretion of each team. However, regular reports must not be neglected.”

Even though we’ve heard this before, spending five days in the sewer is quite tough. Although we have more access to baths now, we’ll probably still smell pretty bad afterward.

“In addition, as of the day following the imperial attack, it seems that there are no remaining soldiers within the mapped area. Therefore, the thorough investigation will be conducted beyond the scope of this map.”

“Why do you know that there are no imperial soldiers within the mapped area as of the day following the attack?”

“The Fairy Lady’s map seems to display points for creatures of a certain size and above. However, on the map from the day after the attack, there were no such point markers.”

“Seriously...”

That map is too convenient. It changes everything, not just in warfare, but in all aspects of governance. However, why can’t they determine whether there are imperial soldiers present right now?

“At present, do you not know if there are any imperial soldiers?”

“We were planning to confirm, but His Highness let the Fairy Lady escape a while ago...”

“Really...”

Her gaze is sharp!

# Chapter 114 - Dungeon Master

Observing the Hero for several days, it became clear that he was planning a dungeon attack. The underground tunnels and sewers beneath the castle, to be precise.

I'm not sure of his exact objectives, but when you think of a hero, you think of RPGs, and when you think of RPGs, you think of dungeons, and when you think of dungeons, you think of underground passages.

However, when I visited the underground tunnels, there didn't seem to be any dungeon-like events. True, the structure had a labyrinth-like quality, but that was about it, and it felt lonely without the abundance of monsters, devious traps, a formidable boss, and treasures that you only get after overcoming all of that.

So, reluctantly and with no other options, I decided to become a Dungeon Master!

But I have to act quickly because it seems like I'll be heading out soon. The Birdcage Maid and the Apprentice Maid have been preparing for a journey. They've packed my clothes and accessories, so I don't think they'll leave me behind.

Therefore, I need to become a Dungeon Master soon!

First, let's talk about monsters. I would like to use monsters, but releasing them into the sewer connected to the city is too dangerous. So, I need to use something as a substitute for monsters. Therefore, I head to the treasure vault and retrieve a shabby life-sized doll. I will let this tattered doll wander randomly through the underground passages. But it's essential that it appears horrifying as it's following people. Its appearance should resemble me, which adds a nice touch to it. As the sewer system is connected to the city, it would likely cause a disturbance. I should disable the sound effects. As the doll has a sword, I'll let it wave the sword around when someone comes close. The sword is quite small, and there's only one arm, so it shouldn't be too intimidating.

Then, traps... Let me think. I'll set a scenario where big boulders roll down a slope. But using real boulders would be too dangerous, so I'll create boulder-like objects made from lightweight materials like styrofoam. I can arrange them to roll down the slope after some time. There's a metal grid on the ceiling, so I can alter its position in a time-based pattern...

Add in a fake treasure chest that springs open like a toy frog. It will serve as a tribute to the Honor Frog Doll, which protected the Birdcage Maid.

As for a boss... I can't think of one. The life-sized doll would suffice as the boss.

Finally, the treasure. I wonder what would be suitable... When you think of a hero, you imagine a sword stabbed into a pedestal, and whoever pulls it out becomes the hero. It's the classic RPG setup. However, I've already made a sword, so I should choose something else. A shield, maybe. If I stab a shield into a pedestal, it doesn't seem cool, does it? I don't know how to display a shield. So, I'll stick with a sword for now. I won't make it easy to pull it from the pedestal. The sword will only come free once the boss is defeated, and the life-sized doll stops moving. It's complete!

The next day, as expected, I set off for my trip. It's a shame that I won't be able to observe the Hero's dungeon attack, but traveling with the Royal Family's money more than makes up for it. Hopefully, I can enjoy some sightseeing this time.

## **Chapter 115 - Won't come back**

“Do you think it's the Empire?”

“...I can't think of any other possibilities.”

After the first day of their planned five-day investigation into the route the Imperial soldiers took to infiltrate the city, two teams return to discuss their findings.

My team was tasked with investigating the underground passages extending from the royal castle. Originally designed as an escape route for the royal family, there were concerns about possible traps that might be triggered if the royals weren't present, which is why my team, led by the Second Prince, was assigned to this area.

However, after a full day of searching for any signs of the Imperial soldiers using the royal family's escape route, we came up empty-handed. It seems the infiltration was indeed made through the sewage system connected to the underground tunnels.

The other team, who returned on the same day, had been assigned to investigate potential external entry points into the underground tunnels without entering directly. This means the team sent into the sewer has not yet returned.

"Even though the elderly head of the Mage Corps is with them, there's a rumor they fought while defecating during the Stampede. Unexpectedly, perhaps they weren't bothered by the sewer's foul odor?"

While I understand it's an unlikely scenario, it's essential to go through the process of checking if your assumption that seems impossible to you might be just as absurd to others.

"Without regular contact, you should consider that the teams are in a critical situation. If this is the case, rather than the potential dangers in the sewage system, we should think that they have been obstructed in some way by the Empire."

One of the soldiers responds, and the others don't offer any counterarguments. The consensus is clear: the Empire is involved, whether through direct combat or indirect interference.

"Do you believe there are Imperial soldiers present, or is it just traps?"

"We should prepare for the worst. Let's assume that there are still Imperial soldiers lurking in the sewer."

Although each team had the discretion to decide when to return, the absence of regular contact raises alarms. If all teams have fallen into such a situation, it suggests interference by the Empire, whether through direct combat or indirect traps.

“So be it. Our next move... Before we consider splitting into two teams for a more extensive search, it’s too risky. There’s a chance of each team being defeated separately. So, we’ll operate as a combined force. Now, where do we begin our search?”

“Before that, could we increase our numbers? Besides, I believe His Highness should be removed from the search team.

Originally, His Highness was needed for the investigation of the royal escape route, but now that the scope has been limited to the sewers, his presence may no longer be necessary.”

I see... They’re suggesting that I should not participate. But I want to go; it’s such an interesting situation. Now, how should I dodge this?

“First, let’s request reinforcements. It won’t be possible immediately, as it will take time for them to prepare equipment, birds, and so on.”

We’ll need survival equipment, not just combat gear, as we’ll be spending several days underground. We also need birds, as we have only one spare bird per team, which may not be enough if we decide to send additional troops. We’d have to borrow more birds, which means that even if we request reinforcements tomorrow, they won’t be ready until the day after.

Expanding the teams will be a bit of a challenge. With a single team of guards, I can manage to reallocate a dozen or so people. Still, we’re missing six who were accompanying the fairies to the north, and apart from that, the entire Second Knight Division should be available.

“In addition, I’m going with them. It sounds interesting!”

I tried to think of reasons not to remove me from the search team, but nothing came to mind.

# Chapter 116 - Boat Trip

I'm currently on a boat, drifting down a river. The water is rather dirty, which is to be expected since it seems to be sewage runoff, and it's both murky and smelly. Definitely not suitable for drinking.

On board are the Birdcage Maid, the Apprentice Maid, six knights who look like knights, one of whom is a woman, and some unknown gentlemen. There are a total of ten humans, one fairy (that's me), and eight horses. The horses and carriages are also on the boat. It feels almost like a ferry, but it's not as big, although it's still a sizable sailboat. It's made of wood, but it's painted black with gold accents, giving it a rather elegant and imposing look. It bears the same emblem as the castle flag on its sails, so it's likely owned by the castle.

Except for our group, the rest of the people on board are most likely the crew, as there are no other passengers. We seem to have chartered the entire boat. However, the crew is quite numerous. Initially, it was hard to tell, but they seem to be the rowing crew responsible for propelling the ship using the oars.

There was an unexpected magician among the crew. He doesn't look like a typical wizard but uses wind magic. On the rear deck, he suddenly stood tall and raised both hands, making me wonder what was happening. It turned out he was using a gust of magical wind to propel the ship's sails and increase our speed. Impressive.

Interestingly, this doesn't seem to be a common practice for ships in this world. Despite observing other passing ships, I haven't noticed the use of magic on their sails. It might be a unique capability of this castle-owned vessel. It appears that magic users are not as common as I thought in this world.

The lowest level of the ship has a low ceiling and looks like a storage area with a lot of equipment. It feels strange to think that just beneath this floor is the river's water.

The level just above the storage area is also a storage space, but with a higher ceiling. It's filled with a massive amount of provisions. It's evident that we have far more food than the crew would consume, so we're probably transporting it. Am I accompanying this food shipment, or are they supplying it as part of my journey? It could be either.

The rest of this level houses the horses and carriages. Each horse is housed in its own partition. When I approached, all the horses turned their heads to look at me. This time, they are familiar faces, and there's no sign of apprehension. If anything, they seem to be inviting me with a nudge. I thought about playing with them, but there's one knight keeping an eye on them. Maybe not.

Lunch was served, and it was thoughtfully prepared in my size. A gentleman who accompanied us and whom I had not met before is apparently my personal chef. It was fascinating to watch him prepare small dishes with his large hands.

I knew that I had small dishes prepared for me, but apparently, they had procured specialized cooking utensils just for me.

They included small knives for cutting meat into tiny pieces, tweezers for arranging small bits of meat on the plate, a brush-like tool for applying sauces, and a case to store them all. They really went all out to make me feel important. It's a bit overwhelming. The lunch was delicious; thank you very much.

In the afternoon, as I was pondering what to do, the Birdcage Maid began reading me a story from a picture book. Perhaps she's trying to teach me to read? I'm not too thrilled about studying, but well, I'm curious about what this story is like, so I might as well give it a listen.

I tried my best to listen, but it was more mentally taxing than I expected to listen to a story told in an unfamiliar language.

To understand the story, I had to work hard, combining the words spoken by the Birdcage Maid with my knowledge of the language's structure and the images in the book. This might be the first time I've used my brain so much since becoming a fairy.

Perhaps it would have been easier if I had been floating around instead of sitting down.

And then it hit me. Motion sickness. Blegh!



# Chapter 117 - Beautiful

The northern royal visit of the fairy lady – we are accompanying her. I never imagined having the opportunity to see the sea at the age of 10. I'm looking forward to it!

The northern part of the kingdom is still grappling with a recent spell of poor harvests, damage from the unusual backflow of the twin deities, and rumors spreading among the former Bastille territory residents due to the takeover by the lord. So, the fairy lady is making this visit as a form of consolation, taking a round trip from the capital to the northern port town.

The backflow, which I saw for the first time, was already an astonishing sight in the capital. The idea of the noble family being taken over was new to me. These past few years have been full of surprises. But don't worry; once the fairy lady passes through, wilted crops recover, and those injured by the backflow are completely healed – it's all good!

I also overheard that part of the plan is to keep the fairy lady from witnessing the execution of the former Bastille Duke.

While they investigate the surviving imperial troops, the route of their intrusion into the castle, and how they crossed the border without alerting the border patrol, they aim to divert the Empire's attention northward. One of the knights accompanying us will govern one of the two divided territories of the former Bastille.

It's quite complicated, and I don't understand it very well. I'll do my best to take care of the fairy lady. I've prepared her room on the ship to ensure her comfort. Once that's done, there's also the care of the horses and the cleaning of the carriages. I must ensure that the birdcage is clean during the times the fairy lady isn't using it.

In the afternoon, I suddenly noticed that Siluela-san was reading a picture book to the fairy lady. Even though the fairy lady can communicate verbally, it seems she can't read or write in the kingdom's script. However, she understands the concept of writing

and has knowledge of how it works. The scholar explained that they use a different script from ours.

So, I thought that Siluela-san was teaching the fairy lady about the culture and the script of the kingdom. But watching Siluela-san, it seems more like she's teaching the fairy lady the language itself. Siluela-san keeps repeating the same sentences and points to the pictures, saying the names of the objects. For example, she pointed to a picture of a dog and said, "This is a dog," many times. Does Siluela-san believe that the fairy lady doesn't understand language?

I wanted to ask about it, but suddenly, the fairy lady began to vomit!

"Um, um, Fairy Lady! Are you okay!?"

"I'll take her to the deck. Please bring water and a towel."

"Yes!"

Could it be seasickness? I never dreamt that the fairy lady would vomit because, as far as I knew, she hadn't been eliminating waste until now. I thought that whatever she ate disappeared immediately. Anyway, I need to hurry and get water and a towel!

"Fairy Lady! It's a damp towel."

I prepared water and a towel and went out to the deck, where the fairy lady was vomiting into the river. Ah, how compassionate.

This river is already very dirty as it receives the sewage from the capital and surrounding cities directly. So, vomiting into the river is not a problem. But looking at the river, I noticed that the sparkling vomit of the fairy lady had not only not polluted the river but had actually made a large area much cleaner.

As expected of the fairy lady! Even her vomit is clean!

# Chapter 118 - Magician

“Hey, you’re new here, right? Are you an outsider too, buddy?”

When I entered the adventurer’s guild in the royal capital that I had traveled quite a distance to reach, it was packed with people. It was convenient for gathering information, but the crowd could also become inconvenient. I decided to start by talking to the guy in front of me.

“Yeah, I just arrived a little while ago. I plan to do some adventuring in the capital for a while. Nice to meet you.”

“Hey there, I’m a newcomer too. But there have been a lot of adventurers arriving recently.”

Indeed, there were many people. The royal capital was known to have a high number of adventurers. It seemed the fairy craze was in full swing. It was all about newbies and veterans alike chanting “fairies, fairies.” I was part of that group as well. Additionally, the royal capital was currently experiencing a rush of requests. It was the perfect time to make money, so it wasn’t surprising that people were flocking here.

“Are you here for the same reason as everyone else?”

“Yeah, I heard that getting close to fairies can cure all sorts of ailments.”

“Too bad for you, though. It seems the fairies are up north right now.”

“Is that so? That’s disappointing...”

Fairies are not here? There is quite a discrepancy between what I’m aware of and what I’m hearing. Since all the spies and collaborators haven’t been able to communicate, the current situation is still

unclear.

“Do you know why they went up north?”

“I have no idea. There was a group of adventurers who came here not long ago, claiming to capture fairies for some wealthy merchant’s request. The royal capital guild got furious with the branch guild that posted the request, saying they shouldn’t have accepted such a job. So, I heard the fairies were moved out of the capital until things cooled down. I’m not sure if it’s true, though.”

Hmm, this wealthy merchant is causing some trouble. They are complicating things by moving the pieces off the board and playing with non-kingdom and non-empire forces.

“Why are fairies so popular? And I heard they have a connection to the royal family. How did that wealthy merchant and those adventurer idiots even get such a request accepted?”

“I don’t know all the details. The royal capital guild has just changed its guild master, and it’s in chaos. Before the stampede, they took action, riding into the castle to bring back troops directly.”

Naturally, they would hold him responsible. From an outsider’s perspective, the former guild master was clearly manipulated. We shouldn’t have changed him, it’s regrettable. But if that’s the case, I need to confirm the new guild master’s information.

“Oh, by the way, what happened to the former guild master?”

“Oh, him? He left for the Eneria in the west to avoid getting into trouble. Pathetic, right? He had climbed all the way to guild master.”

“I see, I didn’t know that. There must have been a stampede, right? He could have become a hero. But maybe not.”

It was to be expected that he would be held responsible. He seemed like a guy who was easy to deceive from my perspective. It’s too bad

that we changed him. But if that's the case, there's a new guild master, so I need to check that information as well.

“Oh, right, while we were preparing for the bloodless defense, there was a girl who was managing things. You know, that one.”

“Really? It doesn't seem that way at all.”

The girl he pointed to with his chin was a young woman who seemed like she was there to receive newcomers, making the atmosphere fun. Or rather, it seemed like she didn't really think about much. It's true that appearances can be deceiving, huh?

“Be careful, alright? The Guildmaster of the Merchants Guild and the Guildmaster of the Alchemist Guild listen to her every word, and even the heroes of the country can't oppose her. They say she went to the castle and took direct command of the troops before the stampede. Everyone who defied her was said to be thrown into the river. By the way, she's a submaster here. Don't mess with her.”

“Is that true? It doesn't seem that way at all. People are unpredictable.”

That seemingly competent guy should have been eliminated, but did I overlook him? I need to check on that guy.

“So, are you a mage or something? You have that kind of vibe.”

“No, no. If I could use magic, I'd be living a different life.”

“Haha, you're nothing like a mage!”

The guy was unexpectedly perceptive. Even though I came dressed in front-line gear, he figured me out instantly.

“Gogooooooooooooooooo!”

“What was that!?”

“What’s going on!?”

Suddenly, a deafening noise that sounded like a roar from deep underground shocked everyone in the guild. Judging by the reactions around, it wasn’t a sound that was heard regularly. But what was that sound?

“What was that just now? It echoed like crazy.”

“From underground? The royal capital has underground waterways, right?”

“Was it a sound? No, a voice?”

“Hey, after the stampede, are we going to have some kind of underground monsters too? Spare us that!”

Speaking of underground, the empire was probably working to reestablish the invasion route right now. Was there some connection?

What’s happening in the royal capital?

# Chapter 119 - Iron Grate

“We’re here.”

“Please be cautious, Your Highness.”

“Yeah.”

Twelve people stand at the entrance to a sewer that unnaturally leads into the underground where it connects with the sewer system. The purpose of the second day of investigating the imperial invasion route has shifted to the rescue of an investigation team that hasn’t returned and the capture of the underground passages.

It’s clear that the Garm War is imminent. If the imperial forces secure the underground passages when that happens, we will surely lose. We’re still not sure how they are bypassing the border, but even if that’s unclear, it should somehow work out. After all, we sent half of the surplus fairy potions to the east. However, we must absolutely secure the underground passage leading directly to the royal castle.

Two soldiers with lighting magical devices in front enter the sewer and inspect their surroundings. This place was definitely used by the imperial soldiers, so there is no need to check if it’s still breathable or anything like that.

“How is it?”

“Yes, no sign of enemies in the vicinity. Everything appears normal. However, as the prisoners mentioned, it’s quite clean here.”

According to the imperial soldiers we captured, this place used to be an extremely dirty passageway before they came to secure it. However, on the day of the Stampede, it became unbelievably clean.

“Is this also the work of the fairies? Did they purify it?”

“I can’t think of any other explanation. The fairy really is amazing.”

“Well, they don’t seem all that smart to me...”

I had observed the fairies for about two days, and I couldn’t say that I had a particularly high opinion of their intelligence.

They just kept repeating the same pattern of clinging to me, getting caught, and escaping. That’s more like foolishness...

But for now, it doesn’t matter.

“Alright, first, let’s confirm the most likely route that the prisoners mentioned. If all goes as planned, the squad led by the Head of the Mage Division should be there. We should try to rendezvous with them.”

A soldier at the forefront, who has a long pole with a lighting device at the tip and a cage attached, advances, followed by another soldier holding a map. If there is any unusual behavior from the bird in the cage, it is a sign of something suspicious, such as poison gas. The pole is made by combining short sections so that it can extend somewhat, making it more flexible.

The width of the sewer is wide enough for about six adults to stand side by side, but most of it is only wide enough for two people to walk along the waterway. Naturally, they end up walking single-file. The soldiers in the back are also equipped with cages so that they can retreat smoothly. The arrangement is symmetric fore and aft, so either end can take the lead. However, there may be too many of them for this group of twelve.

The flow of water is slow, and the sound of the water is not so loud that it would make it difficult to hear anything.

Whether due to the fairies’ purification or not, the typical slimy floor and bad odor found in waterways aren’t much of a problem. This is a relief.



“Something seems strange.”

After progressing a bit, a soldier holding a map raises his voice.

“What is it?”

“The map indicates that we should be able to proceed ahead, but... Look, there’s a metal grid blocking our path.”

“Maybe it’s just that the map doesn’t show this part? After all, despite how high-precision the fairy’s map is, it’s hard to believe it could include such a narrow rod to begin with.”

I heard that the map the soldiers have was made based on a real-time display of the surrounding situation from the fairy’s map. When they made the map, the fairies were inside the castle. Is it even possible for the map to include a narrow rod like this, extending from the castle?

“No, the metal grid blocking this part is on the map. I don’t know... what to do.”

“Let’s go back to the last fork. While we backtrack, we should compare the terrain with the map to ensure our current location isn’t wrong.”

“Understood.”

The soldier at the front now becomes the last, and the soldier who was last becomes the front, as they begin to move back.

The last fork was just up ahead. We just passed by it recently. However...

“Hey, seriously?”

There’s a metal grid before the junction. The path we originally came from is blocked by a metal grid. It was a straight path. There should

be no mistake.

“Is it the work of the Empire?”

“I can’t think of anything else... Can they set something like this up in such a short time?”

“Well, there are iron bars blocking the way. So, we’ve been trapped. Be on guard; they should be nearby.”

We’ve been keeping an eye out for enemy soldiers and observed the situation for a while, but there’s been no movement.

Are they just trying to delay us? If so, staying here for too long will play right into their hands.

“...Let’s move forward again.”

“Yes.”

“Understood.”

“Come on, seriously, what’s the purpose?”

When we returned to the first point where we got stuck, this time the metal grid had disappeared. Seriously, it makes no sense. Aren’t they supposed to want to keep us confined?

“...Shall we proceed?”

“Yeah, we have no choice but to go forward. It’s infuriating; it feels like we’re being played.”

We continued forward, and several times we encountered metal grids that were not on the map. The metal grids would appear and

disappear when you looked away. There should be imperial soldiers who are definitely setting up and retrieving these metal grids, but there's no sign of them. The soldiers' tension is at its limit, not knowing when the enemy will appear. Should we go back once?

As we were pondering this, a deafening noise suddenly echoed.

“Guuuoooooooo!!”

“Wha-what!?”

“Your Highness, get down!”

Damn, my ears are ringing! Is the Empire trying to wear down our spirits like this?

“Your Highness, are you okay?”

“Yeah, I'm a bit dizzy, but I'm fine. Do you know what that sound was?”

“No, it was too loud and echoed too much...”

“I see. Did you hear it from that direction?”

“Could it be... Are you going there?”

“The current situation isn't progressing. We have to go and check something; otherwise, we won't get anywhere.”

“But... No, understood. Let's go.”

“All right.”

Damn it, Empire. They're just doing all sorts of inexplicable work.

Seriously, what's their purpose?

## **Chapter 120 - Are You An Idiot?**

“Here too, you damn Kingdom...”

After the failure of the assault on the Farsian Castle, I took command and led the remaining soldiers in a retreat. Most of my unit members had been taken prisoner, and the ones we managed to bring back were a hodgepodge of troops from various units who had lost their superiors.

After that, we were given orders to reclaim the underground tunnels. There were less than 50 soldiers left, not nearly enough to successfully reclaim the area directly beneath the enemy. If the situation went unnoticed, we might have a chance, but now that we've failed to assault the castle, the Kingdom would undoubtedly try to block our infiltration route with all their might. Sacrificial pawns, that's what we were. Headquarters doesn't really expect us to reclaim the area; it's just good if we can divert some of the Kingdom's resources underground, and if we can reduce their fighting strength, that's even better. Reclaiming the tunnels is a lucky outcome if it happens.

The sewers we traversed were relatively clean. In the section near the entrance, there were a lot of wild animals like bats, but as we moved deeper, there were only small insects to worry about. Fortunately, because of the recent water shortage, there weren't any large aquatic creatures in the water channels.

But even in a small group, there were nearly 50 of us. To avoid spreading out too much, we had to wade in the water. The tunnel was only about the width of two adults, and this meant that our situation was extremely unpleasant. It was unsanitary, and the whole environment was quite unpleasant.

“Is it open this time? The Kingdom, they must be nearby...”

Adding to our discomfort, there was an even more annoying occurrence. The position of the iron grates was changing. In a short

time, a grate that was previously on the other side would suddenly be on our side, and a grate that was blocking our way in front of us would disappear when we moved away. Even if it's a trap, I can't understand the intention behind it.

"Captain, something from the left."

One of the soldiers whispered this to me.

"Kingdom soldiers?"

"No, something small..."

"Ahhhh! It's back!"

"A fairy!?"

"Ahhhh...!"

Appearing before us was a raggedy fairy, the same one that had plunged us Imperial soldiers into terror with its explosive magic! The moment it appeared, our unit fell into chaos, which was bad.

"Hey, calm down! It's just a light and sound show; it doesn't have any lethal abilities! It's not a threat! Frontline, take it down!"

"Ugh! Die, you little bug!"

\*Klank... \* \*Splat.\*

In the next moment, the soldier in the front, who tried to strike the fairy with his sword, heard a slight metallic sound, immediately followed by a splash of water. The fairy was unharmed. What happened? What fell into the water channel?

"Hey..."

“The sword...”

Upon closer inspection, the soldier’s sword had lost its tip halfway. And in the hands of the fairy was a small sword... Did that fairy just parry the soldier’s sword?

“Ahhhh, we’re doomed!”

“Run for it!”

“Hey, don’t run! Calm down!”

It’s no good; once chaos like this takes over, it’s hard to regain control. Those guys who got away early during the castle assault managed to avoid being taken prisoner. Once something happens, they try to escape. The only fortunate part of this unfortunate situation is that the fairy’s movements are slow. It’s not showing any sign of speeding up to chase us.

“What can we do? Retreat! Retreat! Don’t panic; that thing is slow. Fall back and regroup with the ones who ran ahead!”

“Screaming and fire! It’s coming from the front! It’s Kingdom soldiers! Mage shields, step forward!”

“Roarrrr!”

“Division Commander of the Mage Corps, please refrain from screaming in such a confined space!”

“I can’t help it! My magic won’t work if I don’t scream!”

It appears that the enemy is also in disarray. With mages up front and fairies in the rear, the front might be our best chance.

“Go! Charge! There are fairies in the rear, so we have no choice but to move forward!”

We all charge together, and the Kingdom soldiers start to retreat.

“Don’t let them get away! It’s a disadvantage if we let the mage gain distance. Get close and fold them in!”

Fortunately, we’re on an uphill slope. We can’t lose a race against an old man, can we?

“Uwaaaah!”

“Ohhh!”

“Ohh... huh?”

“Division Commander! Kingdom soldiers are turning around! They’re coming this way!”

“Do we fight them? Prepare for a... wait, what’s... retreat! Retreat!”

“Rumble, rumble, rumble!”

“Waaaaah!”

“Ooooh!”

“Ugyaaaah!”

A massive boulder rolls towards us from behind the Kingdom soldiers. If that touches us, it’s instant death! Have the Kingdom soldiers lost their minds? Allies and enemies are mixed together as we run down the slope. There are no side paths; there’s no escape!

“Division Commander! The front! The front!”

“There’s a metal grate!”

“Gasp! Clang!”

The head of the group reaches the metal grate and tries to remove it. But we’re being pushed from behind by both enemies and allies, and there’s no way to remove the grate in this situation. And then a large, round boulder approaches... Is this the end?

“Uwaaah!”

“I don’t want to die!”

“Mooom!”

Rumble, rumble, rumble, clunk!

“...?”

“What is it?”

“It’s... it’s light, this boulder.”

“It... really is.”

“Spread out! Target the mages!”

“Ojyaaaaaa!”

“My ears! My ears!”



Darn it, this Mage is mad! He's been screaming at point-blank range! It's utter chaos. But our numbers are much greater.

Six of them against about fifty of us. We won't lose.

"Division Commander!"

"Ugh, what now?"

"It's... fairies!"

"We need to retreat! Run! That stubborn boulder is in the way! Damn it! Rear guard, get ready with the mage shields!

Move! Move!"

And so, we continued to run for our lives, stumbling and panting. What a mess! Then, when we finally slowed down:

"Haah, haah, haah, haah... Division Commander."

"Haah, haah... What is it?"

"Haah... Huh... there's a... box."

"Yeah, there is."

"...A treasure chest."

"...Yes, that's right."

"Should we... open it?"

"...Go ahead, open it."

“Alright...”

Click! Boing!

A soldier opens the treasure chest, and a frog toy springs out.

“What the... What is this? Seriously?”

“Please calm down, Division Commander!”

Are the Kingdom soldiers just plain dumb? Is that it?

# Chapter 121 - Emergency Sub-Meeting

“The 1st Emergency Sub-Meeting~! Applause, everyone! Yay!”

In one of the meeting rooms at the Adventurer’s Guild, I declared the start of an emergency meeting. I’ve become quite important, haven’t I?

“Why are it just us?”

“Well, you see, the Guild Master is going around to the major guild branches in the vicinity under the pretense of post-transition greetings.”

Right now, the new Guild Master is visiting four towns near the capital in succession. Apparently, they got pretty upset about that request to capture the Fairy Lord from the provincial guild not too long ago. It’s scary...

Guild Masters tend to look gentle on the outside but can be unexpectedly radical, but lately, every time the Guild Master does something radical, for some reason, I’m the one who gets feared. Fearful Sub-Master to the gentle Guild Master, how did it come to this?

“I’m not asking why the Guild Master isn’t here. Why are there just the two of us, and not other staff members?”

“Well, you see, Senior, it’s because I trust you. Right now, there are many confidential matters, and there are things I can’t discuss with everyone.”

“Okay, Sub-Master, that’s enough. What’s on the agenda?”

Senior squinted and looked at me. Hmm, I’m still not used to the fact that all the superior-subordinate relationships have been reversed.

But, I need to continue talking.

“Well, let’s see... Senior, the agenda is straightforward: it’s about the mysterious monster lurking underground! Oh, and while we’re at it, that amazing sword that kids have been swinging around recently.”

I’d like to discuss the Empire’s border crossing and some strange activities to the west, but they are classified, so...

“Is that about the roaring sound we heard twice earlier?”

“Yes, yes, that’s it. Doki! It’s the hellish roar that echoes through the capital! We must track down the mysterious underground monster!”

“Please speak seriously.”

“Uh... I am serious?”

“Regarding the sound we heard earlier, is it understood that we will file an urgent investigation request?”

“Why are you making that face? Well, whatever. Let’s get on with it.”

“Okay. Are you aware of the conditions? The confirmation of the source of the sound is the achievement requirement. If that’s not possible, confirming the presence of any creature that may be responsible will suffice, albeit with a lower score.

First, we’ll start with a small team. As a precaution, make sure the requester is one of the adventurers who participated in the parade.”

If adventurers participated in the parade, their maps have a Fairy Lord check.

“I understand.”

“If we don’t know anything, we may have to investigate the entire underground with human wave tactics. We receive money from the Stampede Defense, despite deductions for the rewards of those who went south. We should have enough room for a large-scale request without a client.”

With the Empire’s threat looming, I don’t want to leave other unknown threats unaddressed. Even if we have to spend a bit of money, I want to resolve this. If Duster-san can handle it well, we’ll receive money from the Trolls, and finances should be alright. There also seems to be potential for other money-making opportunities.

“I’ll proceed with the request.”

“Do you know anything about the children’s swords?”

“Yeah, Senior, do you know something about it? It’s a rumor that kids are swinging around an amazing sword that glows and makes a ‘boing’ sound. I’ve been cooped up in the guild all the time, so I haven’t seen it myself.”

“I’m exhausted. I haven’t seen it either. Do you want to file an investigation request for that as well?”

Hmmm, what should I do? I have to consider Zanten’s situation. I want to have adventurers I trust conduct an investigation for the Fairy Lord map check.

There’s something mysterious about this ‘amazing sword,’ and the more I hear about it, the more it seems to involve the Fairy Lord. I’ve been told not to leak any information about the Fairy Lord from the castle. We have many adventurers coming from outside, and it’s highly likely that imperial spies have infiltrated once again. In fact, they are definitely here.

So, if I request an investigation without knowing the details, I can see the twist being that it’s another imperial infiltrator.

I’m worried about the kids, though. They could be attacked to steal

that powerful sword. I don't want to do it, but I'll have to talk to the castle. Maybe I can push it onto them.

"Ah, we don't need a request for that one."

"Understood."

Ugh, I don't want to go to the castle alone...

# Chapter 122 - Discomfort

I felt a vague sense of unease when I looked at the man in front of me. Why is that?

“Why can only parade participants accept this request?”

“I can’t answer that.”

Some time ago, I had issued a request to investigate the strange noises that had resonated twice in the capital. Strangely, it was a condition that only adventurers who had participated in the recent victory parade could take on this request.

Now, there was an argument brewing because one of the adventurers trying to take on the investigation wasn’t a parade participant. With the Guild Master absent in the capital and the Sub-Master up at the castle, this could become a prolonged issue.

This request isn’t particularly bad, but it’s not particularly good either. The reward amount is standard, and the investigation site is in the capital, but it’s the sewer, an unsanitary environment. I can’t see any reason to be so eager to take this on.

“I see... That’s too bad; I’ll give up on this one.”

He decided to withdraw from the dispute with the adventurer surprisingly easily. However, “this time,” you say... Does that mean there will be a next time?

Anyway, why is this request limited to parade participants? The Sub-Master mentioned that there are many confidential matters. Could it be related to these classified issues? Just to be sure, the requester is set to be a parade participant. “Just to be sure”... to be sure of what? Were they anticipating the emergence of someone like that man?

What was it that guy said? “There’s a lot of confidential stuff going on right now”? At first, I didn’t question it too much because he had been abruptly promoted from a newcomer to Sub-Master, which would naturally involve handling more confidential matters.

But if that was the case, why say “right now”? Why not use an expression like “From now on... many confidential matters will be involved”? Does that mean there’s something truly ongoing at this moment?

In retrospect, this is the fourth time that guy has gone up to the castle. The previous Guild Master held the position for many years, but from what I recall, he visited the castle only a few times. In contrast, that Sub-Master who was newly promoted has already been to the castle four times. It seems excessively frequent.

It’s true that the strange noise in the capital is an abnormal situation, but is it so straightforward to casually visit the castle immediately afterward? Could it be that some major event is unfolding and that he has some understanding of the situation?

It was after the Stampede that he became such an important figure. That Stampede was claimed to have been artificially created, and, to my knowledge, no detailed investigation had been conducted. Typically, such things aren’t possible.

Considering all of this, I decided to observe that man more closely. However, I was looking at him from a distance, and I noticed the mismatch between his equipment and his movements. He was equipped as a front-liner, but his movements were anything but those of a front-liner. His movements were like those of a novice adventurer, focusing on balance and other basics. Is he truly a front-line adventurer?

At the very least, he doesn’t seem to be a front-liner. He may wear equipment like a front-liner, but when you look closely, the small items he carries seem more suited for a magic profession. The staff-like object strapped to his waist—

perhaps it’s a magic wand?



If, hypothetically, he's genuinely not an adventurer, then what is he? Why does he seem to have such an abnormal fixation on investigating the underground of the capital? Is it related to the strange noise? Is there a hostile intent toward the castle, leading to the efficient use of Stampede for an attack? Is there a connection between Stampede and him?

If there is an intention to oppose the castle, then it would imply antagonism toward either the Bastille faction of nobles or, perhaps, the Empire itself.

No, I shouldn't keep piling up speculations like this. The more you theorize on top of theories, the more likely you are to unconsciously twist the conclusions to fit your own convenience. However, that man requires careful attention...

He leaves the guild. Despite not being able to take on the request, he leaves without checking any other available requests? Should I follow him? No, if he's truly an adventurer, tailing him as an amateur will be quickly detected. But, if he's not an adventurer?

"Sorry, but could you take care of the request acceptance process for me? I have something urgent to attend to. And, by the way, please investigate the background of the adventurer who tried to accept this request a little while ago, to the extent possible. You have their name, right?"

"Huh? Wait, Senior?"

"Alright, then."

"Huh, wha—?"

I decided to follow that man.

# Chapter 123 - Luck

Is she tailing me... should I kill her?

No, I'm not sure how much the Adventurer's Guild knows. She's not a professional adventurer following me; she's just a receptionist. If the Adventurer's Guild is marking me, they would send a professional after me.

So, for now, is she the only one who personally suspects me? If that's the case, killing her might raise suspicion within the Adventurer's Guild. As a last resort, I could escape with teleportation, but I don't want to use up a precious teleportation charge just on one woman.

How far does her suspicion go? If they think I'm heavily involved with the Black, then I could easily lose her by throwing her off my tail. But if it's just a "what if" scenario, trying to shake her off would only make her more suspicious. I wanted to enter the underground from a convenient surface waterway, but I don't want to do it with her watching. What a pain.

Seems I don't have the makings of a spy. I've never received any training as a spy, to begin with. Even a brief conversation with a fellow adventurer led to them suspecting me as a mage, and now even the receptionist I interacted with holds some sort of suspicion. We're short-staffed here. That wishy-washy adventurer was talented. It's a shame I lost them, but I only have one teleportation charge. I couldn't use it to escape the prison with that adventurer in tow. I had no choice but to kill them.

Now then, if I continue wandering around aimlessly, it will only increase her suspicion. Luckily, I'm familiar with the underground structure. I'm pretty sure I could enter the underground from the river outside the east gate. I'll make her believe I've left the capital from the east gate and return after that. It's a hassle, but it can't be helped.

I leave through the east gate, and as expected, the receptionist didn't follow me outside. However, I'll move a bit farther from the capital

just to be sure. I've crossed the bridge in front of the east gate, so I'll need to get back to the capital's side of the river. The gatekeeper shouldn't be able to see me, so I put on a visibility-cloak magic tool and made myself invisible to make sure I wouldn't be spotted as I returned across the bridge.

Alright, I found it. There should be a large drainage channel just outside the east gate. I'll need to walk through the river, and it'll get me soaked, but I have no other option. Fortunately, the water is shallow enough, and the current is gentle.

Great, I've found it. I climb up the passage next to the drainage channel. Truly, it's quite challenging for someone as mighty as the world's greatest magician to end up soaking wet and entering the underground. Now, what's this? I sense unusual magical power. Is it for maintenance, or are they using magical tools for the drainage system? No, I haven't heard any information about that. What's this?

I light up the area with a life magic light to get closer. It seems there's something with an abnormal amount of magic power hidden there. Are they using magical tools for the drainage system? No, there's no information like that. What's going on?

As I get closer, I notice something. It's been carelessly piled with wooden pieces. I kick one of the wooden pieces away, revealing five swords! Fire, water, wind, earth, and light – each one of them carries a potent magical aura!

“Hahaha!”

It seems my luck has turned around! Each of these five magical swords seems to be the same as the “swords that can shoot magic blades” that the Empire mentioned. I've found all five of them! To think that such magical swords brimming with an abnormal amount of magical power would be sitting here. This is an unbelievable discovery. I have all the magical swords, which are the kingdom's trump card!

“Hehehe...”

The kingdom is nothing but a joke. Why would they hide magical swords here? If I can take them, it's worth using a valuable teleportation charge.

I teleport away from the location.

# Chapter 124 - Receptionist Witnessed

“So, are the adventurer guild staff playing detective?”

“Something like that. Please let me stay here for a while.”

I persuaded the East Gate guard and settled in the shadow at the edge of the main gate. This situation must be rare. The gatekeepers look at me with curious eyes, but I don't want too much attention. I could be discovered.

The man I was tailing left the East Gate a while ago. He seemed to notice my pursuit since he started wandering aimlessly on the way, so he must have realized it.

One of the actions someone aware of being tailed might take is to leave the scene, make it seem like they've left, then return after some time. So, there was a possibility that the man might come back. He could return from a different gate or after several days. I thought it might be good to wait at the East Gate for a while.

Splash...

After a while, I heard a sound like something being thrown into the river. Thinking it might be a large fish, I looked over, and there was an unnatural dent in the water. What is that? Is there a hole in the river surface? It looks like something transparent is stuck in the river.

The hole in the river surface slowly moved north. I followed the unnatural hole, but halfway through, I couldn't proceed without entering the river. This made me hesitate. Is it safe to step in? Even if I could touch the bottom, the thought of returning home soaking wet deterred me. Besides, this river carries sewage, and for hygiene reasons, I didn't want to enter it.

As I was pondering, unnatural splashes appeared in front of the sewer outlet. Then, the hole in the river disappeared. Did something

transparent move through the river and climb into the sewer? It seemed so, but could something transparent really exist? Some magical creatures can make their bodies transparent, but such threatening monsters are not known to be present near the capital.

“Hahaha!”

Confused and standing still, I suddenly heard laughter. It was that man’s voice! Can he become invisible? Did he manage to make us believe he left and then return invisible?

This is a serious situation. I can’t think of any means for a person to become invisible. Such a feat is impossible for ordinary people. The fact that the enemy of the royal castle can become invisible is alarming.

He’s laughing so joyfully, which means he must have achieved his goal or is in a situation almost certain of success.

There’s nothing more I can do personally.

I must convey this situation to that girl...

# Chapter 125 - Reunion

“Wait, wait, wait. I don’t get it. It’s too incomprehensible.”

“Hmm?”

“Not ‘hmm.’”

The source of the mysterious sound echoing in the sewer was our target, and we successfully joined forces with a reconnaissance team, led by the head of the Mage Guild. Now we’re a group of 18.

“Well, shall I summarize from the beginning?”

“Yes.”

The head of the Mage Guild, looking distant, began to speak. From his melancholic appearance, it was evident that it had been quite challenging to get to this point.

“First, our team, along with His Highness’s team, entered the underground passage from the royal castle and separated on the way to enter the sewer.”

“Yes, I know that. We were together until the middle of the first day.”

“We explored the planned route in the underground passage, encountered obstruction in the form of rearranged iron grates, and couldn’t return.”

“Yes, we also experienced that obstruction. We now know why we couldn’t return yesterday.”

Presumably, other teams that haven’t returned yet are facing similar

obstacles. It was good to know the reason for the non-return for now.

“So, on the second day today, we encountered about 50 Imperial soldiers. It turned into a battle.”

“The scream when the head of the Mage Guild released magic at that time was the source of that strange sound.”

A somewhat absurd story, but that’s how we managed to join forces. The head of the Mage Guild’s scream should be considered useful.

“The strange sound... no, let’s put that aside for now. So, during the battle on the slope, a large boulder rolled down from the top of the slope.”

“What’s with that boulder? What does ‘light’ mean?”

It’s the second time I’m hearing the explanation, but the story still becomes incomprehensible.

“I don’t know what the rock is. Why it rolled down is also a mystery. It’s about the width of this corridor. ‘Light’ means exactly what it says. Even I could easily push it aside with one hand.”

“Hmm, I don’t understand, but got it. And then?”

“To avoid the rolling rock, there was a melee with allies and enemies mixed up. At that moment, the Fairy Lady Doll appeared and repelled the Imperial soldiers. We were also repelled by the Fairy Lady Doll.”

“That’s it. That’s what I don’t understand. It’s too incomprehensible.”

“Hmm?”

“Not ‘hmm.’”



The rock rolling down is already confusing, but the appearance of the fairy doll and being repelled by our supposed ally is even more perplexing. Looking at the Mage Guild head's nonchalant face, I thought my understanding might be lacking, but the soldiers around me also had faces of not understanding. That's a relief.

"Is that Fairy Lady Doll the fairy doll that lured Imperial soldiers during the attack on the royal castle?"

"Yes."

"Then, that fairy doll once again repelled Imperial soldiers. It's not defeating but repelling, meaning the Imperial soldiers are still alive?"

"Yes."

"Uh-huh. So, you guys were also repelled by that fairy doll?"

"That's right. When it gleamed, my magic staff was snapped in two. Luckily, I had a short staff for tight spaces rather than my usual favorite staff. If my favorite staff had been snapped in two, I would have cried, hahaha."

"No, no. Why were you attacked by an ally, the fairy doll?"

While laughing in a way that exuded melancholy, the head of the Mage Guild answered, causing the soldiers to look at him with nothing but sorrow. It was evident that it must have been quite tough, but I still couldn't understand at all.

"That Fairy Lady Doll, you see, attacks anything that moves in its vicinity indiscriminately, regardless of friend or foe.

After repelling the Imperial soldiers during the royal castle attack, the rampaging Fairy Lady Doll caused a commotion in the castle to stop it. It was finally stopped with the help of a skilled adventurer."

“What kind of dangerous thing is that? It attacks anything without distinguishing between friend and foe? It’s like a berserker gone mad.”

“Hahaha. And it had a sword too. The Fairy Lady’s sword, said to have slashed through the Orc King.”

“Slashed through the Orc King? That’s too much!”

Why on earth is such a dangerous thing unleashed in the sewer? It should be sealed somewhere unreachable. This sewer is connected to the city. It’s dangerous once it gets out. That doll needs to be retrieved.

“Anyway, I understand the situation. Still don’t get the meaning, though.”

Damn, the targets have increased. Let’s see, dealing with Imperial soldiers, rescuing other investigation teams, and now retrieving a damn fairy doll.

“Then...”

“Is there still something?”

I feel like I’ve heard the entire story from the separation until now. The information is already overwhelming. I might break down.

“Yes. Obstruction of the route by moving iron grates. This was probably the doing of the Fairy Lady... “

“What? Why would it do such a thing?”

“The Fairy Lady knew that remnants of the Empire were still in the sewer. It anticipated further attempts at re-entry. So, it sent the Fairy Lady Doll as interference and had the iron grates manipulated.”

“Why are we in danger because of that?”

“The Fairy Lady didn’t anticipate that we would enter the underground passage.”

“Hmm...”

Is that really the case? Am I interpreting it too favorably for the kingdom? If it’s truly omniscient, it should have anticipated us entering the sewer to confirm the Imperial soldiers’ intrusion route.

If it didn’t anticipate that, the abnormal level of foresight and the inconsistency I’ve been hearing so far would be confusing. If it intentionally sent in a dangerous doll after anticipating our entrance, that’s too dangerous.

No, wait. That fairy, even though it fled midway, was present at the meeting. In other words, it must have known that we would enter the sewer. Yet, it still sent in the damn fairy doll.

Could it be that this is surprisingly amusing for the mischievous fairy, rather than the overly strategic moves we’ve been hearing? It seems to match the image of a mischievous fairy who enjoys pranks more than the strategic genius portrayed so far.

No, no, wait a minute. I can’t figure it out. Until now, I’ve left all the thinking tasks to my older brother. For now, let’s focus on breaking the current situation.

“All right, let’s go back. We can bring reinforcements tomorrow. Priority is to bring back information. There’s a lot we don’t understand, but let the smart folks think about it.”

“Yes.”

“Understood.”

“Got it.”

“Then let’s go... What!?!”

Just as we were about to return, the dark sewer was suddenly illuminated brighter than daylight!

“A Fairy Lady Doll!”

What? That thing? I thought it would be as bright as standard lighting when you said it glowed, but does it have this much brightness?! The abnormal brightness quickly subsided, but it felt like the sun had appeared right in front of us!

“Dangerous! Move away!”

“Got it! Hey, evacuate!”

Damn, it doesn’t seem like they’ll let us return smoothly. The head of the Mage Guild is now powerless without his magic staff. It’s become quite a troublesome situation.

Hmm, I still think it’s stupid.

# Chapter 126 - Fortress City

We arrived in the city by boat, sailing down the winding Domburakkoro River before nightfall. It's smaller than the city I'm used to, but still quite large. Despite being on a boat, it seems navigation isn't possible at night, as the magical lights are only present around the castle. Nights in this world are generally pitch black.

We took a carriage on the boat and disembarked while still on the carriage. As we entered the city, we were greeted by the residents with a somewhat ambiguous atmosphere. It's like half joy, half sorrow? No, it's more like a complex mix of emotions. Are you feeling confused?

I sense a faint hostility or something resembling it from the entire town. It's similar to the feeling I had when I first went to the castle or the adventurer's guild, but not quite. It's the reaction when people don't hold particularly good feelings towards me.

Hmm. I was expecting more like, "Wow! It's the fairy!" or something. When I went south, that was the actual reaction, but it seems my popularity hasn't reached the north.

Is this the proverbial frog in the well? Speaking of which, I wonder how Froggy in the sewer is doing now? By this time, it should be scaring the hero, right?

The city sprawls east and west, divided by the river. The cityscape is not much different from the previous city, but the surrounding walls and such are imposing. It gives off a fortress city vibe.

On both sides of the river, there are hills, and on the eastern hill, there is a castle. Well, more like a fortress. Is it a fortress? The river, too, has a formidable gate at the entrance, solidly guarded. If attacked by boat, this would likely be the last line of defense.

The carriage makes several hairpin turns, climbing the eastern hill towards the fortress. In front of the carriage are three knights, and two behind. The group, half crimson from the twilight and half silhouetted, advances steadily. There should be six knights in total, so one is missing. Maybe they went ahead for communication?

From this elevated position, you can somewhat overlook the city. There are many places along the river that seem under construction. Come to think of it, a little while ago, seawater was flowing backward from the sea, and maybe the damage from that incident hasn't been fully repaired yet.

Inside the carriage are the birdcage maid, the apprentice maid, me, and the cook. The cook's fingers are still thick as ever.

It's amazing that he can cook tiny dishes with those thick fingers. The birdcage maid still tries to teach me. Currently, she's endlessly showing me cards with pictures on one side and words on the other. Probably, the words on the back are the names of the pictures. Even if I feel like I've learned a few nouns, when shown the same card a few minutes later, I'm shocked at how I've completely forgotten. This is impossible.

In this way, we approached the fortress. The sound of gears turning, a massive iron grate-like structure lifted, and then a wooden door slowly creaked open. There's no moat, so there's no drawbridge, but it's still a quite formidable fortress.

We disembarked in a courtyard-like area inside the fortress, and a butler-like person welcomed us. The knights also dismounted. The two knights moved the horses to the stable, while the three knights and us entered the fortress.

Upon entering, maids lined up on either side of the entrance hall, and beyond them, there was a large painting. Oh, why, oh why? How come? It's me! A gigantic portrait of me, about three meters tall, is proudly displayed! I refused to have my portrait circulated!

You scoundrel, leader-guy! You've schemed against me!

## Chapter 127 - Adventurers

“It’s still pretty clean, big bro. It used to be a total mess.”

“Yeah, you’re right. Did the reverse flow clean it up?”

Our party of four is currently exploring the sewer in the morning to investigate the mysterious sound that occurred earlier.

Just a quick dip into the sewer to figure out the source of the noise and then return. It was a job that others didn’t look favorably upon due to its dirty nature, but for us who knew that the sewer had become cleaner, it was a good job.

When the kids got washed out into the river during the reverse flow, part of the sewer had to be blocked to prevent them from accidentally flowing into the river. We were in the sewer at that time too, and we learned that the sewer had become clean. Well, the cleanliness is probably thanks to the fairies. Most mysterious things are usually the work of fairies.

Once we entered, we were familiar with the internal structure near the entrance. Considering how loud that noise was, we should quickly figure out what it was.

“Huh? ... Was there a metal grate here? I don’t remember much after some time has passed.”

One of my younger comrades found a metal grate and tilted his head. Even in my memory, there was no metal grate here... Did they add another blockage since then? Well, we’ll just move forward. No problem.

“Yeah, we’ll go this way. Make sure to mark it on the map.”

“Oh? Big bro, look. Isn’t that... hey, isn’t that a fairy bastard?”

“What? The fairies are up north now; you must be mistaken... But, you’re right. It looks like a fairy. But something feels off, doesn’t it?”

The fairy approaches. Upon closer inspection, it looks tattered. Hey, hey, hey, is one of its arms missing? What happened?

This fairy is the hero who saved the city. If such a hero is missing an arm and looks tattered, the capital might even go into a panic.

“Big bro, isn’t this kind of dangerous? The atmosphere is getting intense...”

“Maybe it’s holding a grudge for that time we tried to catch it, and now it’s waiting for us to act in an unpopular place for revenge...”

“No way. What are you scared of? Look.”

Zan!

I try to poke the fairy with the long stick I brought to investigate the bottom of the sewer, but the fairy effortlessly slices the stick with the sword it’s holding. There was absolutely no resistance felt in my hand that was holding the stick. In other words, that small sword has an incredible sharpness? Looking at the cut section of the stick, it’s completely flat.

“Hey, hey, hey, this might be really bad... Let’s get away.”

“Uhi. That fairy guy seems to be the type to hold a grudge after all.”

Quickly distancing ourselves from the area, we sense the presence of a large number of people. What’s going on? Why are there so many people in the sewer?

“Hey, are those soldiers from the royal castle? Are they here to investigate the noise too? What do we do, big bro?”



“No, wait, there’s something over there too. Are those soldiers? Their equipment doesn’t look like the royal castle’s.

Woah, they’ve started a fight!”

Fortunately, as we descended further for the investigation, we are on a slope, and our position is higher than theirs. They shouldn’t have noticed us yet. Should we retreat? No, there’s a possibility that they might be the cause of the noise.

“Let’s observe for a while. If the royal castle side wins, we can approach and ask about the situation. If the other side wins, let’s escape and report to the guild.”

“Oh, big bro! Behind us!”

“What’s up?”

Roll, roll, roll, roll, roll, roll, roll, roll, roll!

What the!? A massive boulder is rolling towards us!? If that thing hits us, it’s instant death!

“Oh no! Run! Run!”

“Wait, hold on!”

“Uhi!”

Damn it! If we keep going like this, we’ll end up right in the middle of that battle! But if we stop, we’ll be crushed by the boulder and die instantly!

“Run through the middle of that! Don’t stop! If you stop, you’ll die! Uoooooh!”

“Uwaaaaaaah!”

“What’s this!? Stop! Stop right there! Considered enemies!”

Soldiers in the midst of battle notice us and demand that we stop...

“Can’t stop, damn it! You guys run too! You’ll be crushed by the boulder!”

“That boulder is light! It won’t kill you even if it hits! Stop!”

“No way! Get out of the wayyyyyy!”

The weight of that boulder, the approaching deep bass sound, there’s no way it’s light!

We continue running through the middle of the two opposing forces.

# Chapter 128 - Shield

Encountering imperial soldiers led to a sudden battle, only to have adventurers dash through the midst of it with a boulder in tow.

Is that boulder actually light despite its appearance? It looks heavy. Well, those adventurers must be desperate to run like that. But upon closer inspection, it seems to be floating on the water. Can a boulder look like that and still float?

However, things have become complicated. In the midst of this chaos, it seems that adventurers who are unaware of the situation are joining in...

I have no idea what's going on, but don't get swept away by the chaos. Stay calm. The numerical difference between us and the imperial soldiers is significant. I want to avoid combat until we can either join forces with another group or get reinforcements. I'd like to take advantage of this chaos to escape, but... I kick the boulder that rolled towards us over to the side of the imperial soldiers.

“Retreat! Fall back!”

Seemingly, they want to avoid a fight too. There's no sign of them pursuing. We run for a while, putting some distance between us, and then stop.

“This has become quite a mess. The Adventurer's Guild likely sensed some kind of anomaly underground. Whether it's the movements of the empire, our actions, or perhaps the machinations of the fairies. They must have sent adventurers for investigation purposes. Damn, we should have informed the Adventurer's Guild beforehand. Adventurers seeing imperial soldiers is not good.”

“What's done is done. More importantly, my lord.”

“What?”

The head of the Mage Corps closes his eyes, concentrating as if sensing something. What’s happening now? At this point, I won’t be too surprised by anything.

“I sense an unusual magical power. It’s a very large magical power. This feels similar to the fairy sword.”

“Again with the fairies. Let’s go check it out.”

“This is it.”

Guided by the head of the Mage Corps, we reach a small room-like space. It might be for sewer maintenance. In the middle of that space, something like a shield is impaled into the floor.

“What do you think it is?”

“A shield, perhaps...?”

“Hmm...”

The base is a shield, but it doesn’t look very practical as a shield. First of all, it’s oddly large. It’s not as massive as a tower shield for heavy infantry, but it’s not small enough to be swung with one hand. The thickness is also unnecessarily great. It’s too small to be used standing on the ground, yet too large and thick to be wielded by hand.

Moreover, what’s particularly annoying is that there are fairy wing-like protrusions on both sides. Are they for decoration?

Checking from behind, there are leather straps and handles for securing it to the arm. Surprisingly practical for a decoration. But the structure on the back, that’s definitely a shield. No doubt about it.

Could it be light? Considering the earlier incident with the large boulder, it might be. It looks solid, but there's a possibility it's light enough to be swung. Those wings on both sides are quite bothersome, though.

"Hmm, won't budge."

I tried lifting it, but it's firmly stuck in the floor, impossible to pull out. Oh well.

"All right, let's leave it. Returning as planned... Whoa!?"

Suddenly, it became as bright as daylight! This is bad; it's that cursed fairy doll. We've been cornered into a dead-end alley.

"My lord! There should be a power source in the chest of that doll! Removing it should stop it!"

I see. I threw the magical illuminating tool I had. The fairy doll cut it down. It seems to pause for a moment after each attack. In that brief moment, I slid my sword into the side without the arm.

But it's faster than I thought! My sword was sliced halfway through. However, if I've closed the distance this much, I can make it! During the split second pause after its attack, I grabbed the arm of the cursed fairy doll.

The cursed fairy doll started moving its body around the axis of its arm! Ugh, gross! Since it was originally in bad shape, the arm of the cursed fairy doll came off.

Splash!

The cursed fairy doll, with only its arm and a small sword remaining, fell into the sewer.

Splash splash!

I thought, then it splashed wastewater everywhere! The filthy water sprayed up.

“Ugh, disgusting!”

“Uwa, pfft. Please spare me.”

Oh well. Without the sword, it's just shining. I reached into the sewer and pulled up the cursed fairy doll, checking the chest area. So this is it. I removed the stone embedded in its chest, and the cursed fairy doll went limp.

Clank.

“What's that? What's happening now? What's going to happen next?”

“I don't know. But, my lord, you truly are amazing. To stop the Fairy Lord Doll.”

“My lord, it's the shield. The sound seemed to come from the shield.”

“Hmm.”

With the battered cursed fairy doll tucked under my arm, I pulled the shield on the floor, and this time it came out smoothly.

It's surprisingly light!

# Chapter 129 - Smell

“I see, understood. It seems an investigation is indeed necessary for those children’s swords.”

“Yes, that’s why I’d like to request an investigation from the royal castle.”

Princess nodded as I explained, so I promptly delegated the handling. I had just explained the matter of the impressive swords wielded by the children to Princess and a few royal castle staff.

It was surprising that the princess herself appeared in person, considering the likelihood of involvement by the Fairy Lord, but surprisingly things seemed to work out when we talked. Just as I was thinking that, before getting her approval to take charge, there was a knock on the door.

“What’s going on? — Oh, I see.”

An important person approached the door, inquired about the situation, then approached the princess. It seemed like he was conveying something, but I couldn’t hear it. The princess nodded as if she had agreed to something, and next, my senior appeared.

“Excuse me.”

“Wow. Senior, what brings you here?”

Nervously, Senior explained how he came to the royal castle. The man who can become invisible was doing something underground. He claimed to be an adventurer, but upon investigation, he had just become an adventurer. If he can become invisible, it might be the invisibility magical tool that Zanten had. If there’s only one invisibility magical tool, it might be the work of someone who took it. In other words, an imperial spy.

“So, there’s a possibility that the man achieved something underground?”

“Yes. He seemed to be in a good mood, laughing heartily, so that’s also a possibility.”

The princess turned her gaze towards us.

“How much does she know?”

It was a confirmation of how much Senior knew.

“Nothing at all. Should I inform her?”

“...That’s fine. She seems to have excellent observation skills. Rather than being partially understood without notifying her, it’s better to disclose the information and have her help.”

“Well done, Senior! Identifying the man who can become invisible from such a minor discomfort is commendable! From now on, I can consult with Senior about various things and leave them to him! Fantastic!”

“Do you remember his face? — Understood. Let’s have a portrait of that man drawn. Now, let’s discuss the current situation within the limits of what we can reveal until the painter arrives.”

So Senior explained the approximate situation. He explained that the Frontier Stampede was a diversion set up by the Empire, the Royal Stampede was artificially caused by the Empire, the investigation into how the Stampede was triggered was underway at the royal castle, Bastille, the former duke, was connected to the Empire, the fact that the people didn’t want to know they were under attack from the Empire, and the reason they couldn’t actively use adventurers was because there were Empire spies among them. He also mentioned that the spy posing as an adventurer had the invisibility magical tool.



However, details about the Fairy Sword, the existence of the Fairy Lord's map, and the fact that Empire soldiers had infiltrated from underground to the royal castle were kept hidden.

After that, a painter arrived, and based on Senior's explanation, he began drawing a portrait of the man. There were exchanges like, "Make the eyebrows a bit like this" or "Make the eyes a bit narrower," and finally, when it seemed to be finished, there was another knock on the door. This time, a strong and forceful knock. Before Princess could react, the door was swung open.

"Yo! I'm here to disturb!"

"Brother?"

Ugh! The stench is unbearable! But if the princess calls him brother, he must be the prince. I can't possibly mention the smell! But seriously, it stinks!

"The Guild's sub-master is here! Hey, sis!"

"...No, the sub-master is right here."

"Seriously? Hey, miss!"

"Y-yes!"

The prince is here to deal with the Guild's sub-master? Did he mess up something? Oh no...

"Did you dispatch adventurers to the sewers? Wait, before that, how much do you two know?"

"Well, both of us are aware of the Empire's situation. As for the sewers, we issued an investigation request for the mysterious sound that echoed in the capital around midday!"

Eek, his glare is intense! Oh right, this prince was in the sewers, so that's why it smells so bad. Wait, does that mean the strange sound is related to the royal castle? Darn it, maybe I shouldn't have issued that investigation request so easily!

"Four adventurers saw Empire soldiers. When those adventurers return, make sure to silence them."

"Understood!"

"Are there any other adventurers who entered the sewers?"

"No, only one party of four adventurers."

Senior answers this one. Phew, I'm glad Senior came. I only knew about the request I made, so I wouldn't know if there were others.

"I see, understood."

Seems like there won't be any particular consequences! Good.

"By the way, there was a strange sound in the capital around midday. Do you happen to know anything about it?"

"Huh? Oh, that's probably it. It's the scream of the Chief of the Mage Division."

"Ah, I see... I understand."

Ugh, right, that Chief of the Mage Division screams when using magic. It was rumored during the Stampede too. Well, there's no way I would notice something like that! Anyway, let's stop thinking about it. What matters now is how to quickly silence the adventurers who saw the Empire soldiers.

“So, what brings you here?”

We explained to the prince about the children’s swords and the invisible man.

“I see. Alright, I’ll check out the place where the man was laughing. The sewer exit is convenient. It’s filthy now, but hahaha, it’s suitable. Show me the way.”

“Brother, this is too sudden. What about the rescue of the investigation team that hasn’t returned yet? And what about that luxurious shield-like thing?”

“Yeah, I’ll leave the rescue of the investigation team and capturing the remaining Empire soldiers to the Second Knight Order tomorrow. The Empire side was also avoiding combat in the sewers. It’s confirmed that there’s no immediate danger. What’s concerning is their inability to return. It’s probably the Fairy Lord’s prank. This shield is likely the same.

A fairy’s prank.”

“...Quite a bit of explanation is being omitted, but understood. Let’s hear the details from the soldiers behind. However, it’s unacceptable for you to walk around the city in such a filthy state.”

“Well, try to persuade them somehow. Look, it’s an amazing shield. Use it to win Mother’s favor! Okay, let’s go!”

The prince handed the shield to the princess. But seriously, are you going to ride in the same carriage with this dirty prince? Ugh... No, I came separately with Senior. Alright, I don’t need to go. I need to get back quickly; work is piling up, and there’s the task of silencing the adventurers who saw the Empire soldiers.

“What are you dawdling for? Come on, let’s go!”

Agh! Don't grab my arm like that! Don't pull me! But he's royalty!  
Endure! Endure!

Ugh, it stinks!

## **Chapter 130 - Stolen?**

"Is it over there?"

"Yes."

Traveling by carriage to the East Gate, we bypassed the surprised gatekeeper and, guided by my senior, arrived at the edge of the pier. My senior pointed to the open sewer beyond.

"Alright, let's go."

"Understood."

With a splash, the prince and two soldiers jumped into the river. The prince is quite aggressive, isn't he? I had heard that the second prince, despite being a member of the royal family, had trained with soldiers since childhood and was quite straightforward, but he exceeded my expectations. I always imagined that royalty would delegate practical tasks to others and maintain a dignified demeanor.

"Hey, what are you guys doing there?"

The prince, who had advanced noisily to the sewer, shouted in surprise. Is there someone there?

"Wow!? What's up, big brother!"

"He's bringing soldiers with him!"

"Hey, are they here to catch us!?"

Huh? I hear children's voices. Are there children in the sewer? Come to think of it, didn't the children come out of the sewer and get carried away by the river? I heard that part of the sewer was blocked off, but are children still coming here?

"Step aside a bit. Yoisho."

"Ugh, you're weird! This guy's weird!"

"Yeah, really weird!"

"So weird! Super weird!"

The prince climbed out of the sewer, and the children started making a commotion. Oh no, that person is the prince! It might be a bit troublesome. I can't complain even if I'm thrown into prison for disrespect or, worst-case scenario, if I'm executed!

"Hey, you kids over there!"

"What's up?"

"It seems there are still people outside."

At my voice, the children peeked out from the sewer's exit. Three people? No, there are more voices. How did they get in?

"Don't play there! You'll get carried away by the river!"

I can't easily tell them not to mention the smell. For now, let's stop the children's "smell" chorus and steer the conversation in the direction of not playing there.

"It's okay! The river won't rise like that until next year!"

“Yeah, that’s right! It’ll be fine for almost another year!”

“Even if it rains, the water won’t rise!”

“Exactly, we’ve been fine even when it rained!”

“That’s right, that’s right!”

Oh geez, their peculiar responses make no sense. My senior is looking indifferent as usual. Hmm, maybe I should just leave them alone. But I’m worried about the prince’s reaction. Is he angry at the disrespectful children, or is he laughing and forgiving them?

“So, did anything unusual happen?”

I ask about the main topic, including checking the tone of the prince’s voice. What kind of reaction will we get?

“Yeah, I have no idea at all! Hey, you guys, did anything unusual happen?”

“Our swords were stolen!”

“Yeah, our cool swords were stolen!”

“Darn it, we’re definitely going to get them back!”

Swords? Is it about those incredible swords the children were swinging around? I didn’t expect that topic to come up. And it seems the prince isn’t angry. That’s a relief.

“Well, you guys! I want to hear the details, so come over here! Please!”

“Ugh, we don’t want to!”

“We’ll get wet if we go into the river.”

Hmm, did the children come all the way here without entering the river? I wonder how they did it.

“Did you guys happen to come through the sewer to get here?”

“Yeah!”

“Some parts became impassable, but we explored, and now we can come here again!”

Wow, what adaptability. Truly, children easily overcome adult countermeasures. My senior is still acting like he has nothing to do with this. Hmm, what should I do?

“Do you guys intend to return to the city through the sewer? Don’t do it. The current sewer is in a mess because of the fairy nonsense. Besides, some dangerous guys are wandering around. We’ll give you a piggyback ride, so get out of the river.”

“Ugh, we don’t want to! You guys are weird!”

“Damn it, you brats!”

“Whoa, Nick!”

“Nick! Niiick!”

“Ah!”

Splash!

What!? A child from the sewer drew a gentle arc and fell into the river. That prince actually threw a child into the river!

One of the soldiers hurriedly lifted the child. What a mess.

But once one child came to us, the others who had given up also came quietly. Honestly, I'm relieved. I don't want children in the sewer with imperial soldiers.

"So, the hidden swords are missing!"

"Are they the swords that light up and make a 'boon' sound when you swing them?"

"Yeah, they're cool! Boon! Boon!"

"But even if you hit something, the sword bends and it's safe."

"Hmm, the sword bends? So even if you hit something, you won't get hurt?"

"Yeah, that's right. It doesn't hurt even if you hit a stone wall with all your might!"

"And that was missing?"

"Yeah, it got stolen!"

"Did you see where it was stolen?"

"We didn't see!"

"But it definitely got stolen! Swords don't just disappear on their own!"

Hmm. This means that the man who can become invisible took the children's swords, right? Why? He found a safe sword that doesn't hurt even if you hit something and laughed about it? Hmm?



“What do you think, Miss Submast?”

“Me? Well, I think the man took the children’s swords, but... why, I wonder.”

“Maybe he mistook them for the fairy swords? There were five swords, one for each attribute, right? The conditions are quite similar.”

“Oh, come on. That’s too stupid.”

The fairy sword that supposedly mowed down imperial soldiers and the safe children’s toy sword... could he have mixed them up?

“Hmm, let’s return to the castle first. I want to hear other opinions. Just to be safe, one person should continue investigating here.”

“Then I’ll return to the guild. There’s also the matter of keeping adventurers who entered the sewer quiet.”

“Senior!?”

Oh no! Oh no no no! Senior is going back to the guild, and I’m heading back to the royal castle again? Well, I do have a higher position, so maybe that’s a natural flow? But Senior, he’s the only witness! Ah, he’s gone...

Well, back to the smelly carriage to the royal castle.

# Chapter 131 - Usage

The sword had a shape I had never seen before. It seemed impractical, as if it pursued only coolness and beauty without practicality.

The spy from over there took all five magical swords, as they claimed. Although the Empire only handed over two to us, ultimately, the Empire would obtain all of them.

The guard of that sword resembled the wings of fairies depicted in picture books, with an asymmetric, distorted, yet beautiful craftsmanship. The transparent guard on the golden rim made it clear, even to an amateur like me, that it was not designed for slashing.

The grip was long like a two-handed sword, yet thin, seemingly designed for the hands of women and children. Despite that, the length of the blade was shorter than a typical short sword. The length of the grip and the blade was unbalanced.

The single-edged blade was also thin, and the overall appearance for practical use seemed unreliable. Even a ceremonial sword would be more practical, while this one seemed like a child's toy. Looking at it again, it seemed just the right length for a short sword suitable for a child to wield.

However, the blade shone brightly! It couldn't be just a child's toy! The abnormal magic was so strong that even I, who could only use life magic, could sense it. If the purpose was to deceive us, they would have prepared a more traditional-looking sword.

The kingdom claimed that they used this sword to shoot magical blades. The distorted shape of the sword was designed only for shooting magic. The thin, short blade indicated that the method of using the sword was not for slashing or stabbing. The long handle was designed to suppress the recoil of shooting magic with both hands.

Thinking about it in this way, the shape of the sword seemed quite rational. Each of the five swords was said to be adorned with a color

corresponding to its attribute. The sword here would likely be of the fire and earth attributes, represented by red and brown. If you swung the red sword, it would cut through enemies with a flaming blade, and if you swung the brown sword, it would crush enemies with stones.

However, despite this, swinging the sword did not release any magical blades. Even showing it to a magician only resulted in a puzzled expression. Having soldiers swing it only produced a ‘boon’ sound. The activation conditions were unclear. How do you make magic blades fly with this sword?

It shouldn’t be a fake. Even over there, they referred to this sword as a magic sword. According to reports, it continuously shot magical blades without any incantation. It shouldn’t have time-consuming conditions. If it can be fired continuously, it should activate within one action, or at most two actions.

However, even if it can’t be used, there is no problem. They claimed to have taken all five of the kingdom’s trump cards.

In the next battle, the kingdom won’t have any magic swords. The concerns have disappeared. The way to use the magic sword is to first bring down the kingdom before dealing with the magician from over there and slowly extracting information from the kingdom’s people.

There are other points of concern. The fairy headed north. Also, the enchantment that the magician from over there placed on the nobles in the north of the kingdom has been lifted. Is this also the work of the fairy?

Well, once I abandoned Bastille, the north of the kingdom became unnecessary. They were originally individuals who were undecided between the empire and the kingdom. It doesn’t matter if they are discarded. The enchantment from over there was lifted before dealing with them. It’s actually quite convenient.

— Indeed, the tide is in favor of the empire.

## **Chapter 132 - To the Treasure Room**

“Let’s assume it was a misunderstanding with the fairy sword. Leave it be.”

Back in the stinky carriage, the prince cleaned himself up from the sewage, the important figures gathered, and... the discussion that I had waited for so long was concluded with just one word from the queen. Well, this was definitely something I didn’t need to be a part of, right?

“Should we spread rumors that the fairy sword was stolen?”

“There’s no need to do anything. There’s no need to create unnecessary distrust among the common people.”

“One sword was bestowed upon an adventurer. Won’t the Empire notice the discrepancy in numbers?”

“Even if they notice, it’s not a problem. Either way is fine. Besides, that adventurer is away from the capital for a while, taking on a distant request. It won’t be easily detected by the spies working within the capital.”

Hmm, I wonder if they know that Duster is heading to the southeast forest. It would be strange not to mark a powerful adventurer like her. Ah, Duster, she got collared...

“As for the children, let’s give them five imitation swords. They are safe to handle.”

“Yes.”

Oh, good for the children. They get replacement swords. But well, the royal family wouldn’t just act out of goodwill.

There must be various reasons, like preventing the children from making a fuss about a fantastic sword being stolen.

“By the way, Your Majesty, what happened to the fairy doll and the

shield?”

With the conversation coming to a close, the prince asked the queen. He's the second prince, even though there's also the first prince. The shield is the one the prince had at first, with the fairy wing-like ornament. And the fairy doll is probably the fairy-like doll that went berserk during the attack on the royal castle.

“We are currently having the fairy doll cleaned. Once it's tidy, we'll place it back in the treasure room.”

“Is that safe? What if it goes berserk again? We should seal it away in an unreachable place. That's my humble opinion.”

Oh, did that explosive doll go berserk again somewhere? With the prince going to the sewers and the fairy doll being cleaned, did it go on a rampage in the sewers this time? Ugh, that would be too vicious.

“The fairy doll is a savior who rescued the royal castle from the Empire's soldiers. It's not dangerous. It probably prevented the Empire's invasion even in the sewers. It's not a threat.”

“....Understood.”

The prince reluctantly backed down. That doll, is it heading to the treasure room? It's a magnificent doll that saved the royal castle, so it's only natural, but as someone who went through a terrible experience due to that doll causing the carriage to run amok, I have mixed feelings...

“And then, once the efficacy of the shield is determined, it will also go to the treasure room.”

“Will it be used in the war against the Empire?”

“We are currently discussing that. There's caution regarding the nation using fairy weapons in a national conflict. We are checking the reactions of neighboring nations. Even if we decide to use it, there's

the issue of who to entrust it to. It needs to be someone everyone agrees on; otherwise, unnecessary problems like jealousy and slander may arise.”

“Understood.”

Well, there are various things, huh?

By the way, was it a good thing that I listened to all this?

# Chapter 133 - Consolation Visit

A new morning dawned in the unfamiliar town!

Last night was a gracious dinner hosted by noble hosts, but this morning, it was a regular breakfast. As I enjoyed my meal, I observed my surroundings carefully. I needed to determine whether we would depart soon or stay for a while.

The luggage brought in last night for me and the maids wasn't neatly packed in one place. I checked to ensure everything was placed in its intended location—clothes in the closet, bags tucked into inconspicuous corners.

The conclusion drawn from this was that we wouldn't be leaving immediately. Not departing right away meant there was time for sightseeing! I rushed out of the room towards the new town.

From the hill on the east side, I overlooked the town. The most prominent features were the large river dividing the town and the three massive bridges spanning it. Huge and tall, especially the central bridge. The river had steep cliffs resembling seawalls, and the bridges soared even higher. The central bridge, in particular, was exceptionally colossal. It had to be that tall to allow large ships to pass underneath.

At the base of the bridges, there were plazas on both the east and west sides. Perhaps those were the liveliest spots. Let's start by heading to the plaza in front.

Even though it was still morning, the plaza had quite a crowd. As I approached, people who were strolling around started pointing at me and making a commotion. Hmm, a fresh reaction. In my usual town, I might not attract much attention anymore. But being a fairy, I'm probably a rare sight. After all, I've never seen another fairy besides myself.

Enjoying the attention and feeling a bit like a celebrity, a man with

high energy approached. Autograph? Does he want an autograph? Wait, I've seen this person before. He's a minstrel, the minstrel brother. Hmm, encountering acquaintances in a different town really lifts the spirits.

After exchanging pleasantries, the minstrel brother performed a song, and I added sparkling effects. I couldn't understand the content of the lyrics, but the melody was delightful. The townspeople seemed moved by the music, and the faint malice towards me seemed to diminish. Then, several people placed coins in a small box in front of the minstrel brother.

Ah, this is how they earn money. I peeked inside, and there were copper coins. Oh, this side profile—could it be Lord Doorup? Even though it's worn from rubbing, Lord Doorup is depicted on the copper coin. Hmm, it feels strange when someone you know is on currency. The opposite side has a mark I've never seen before.

After watching for a while, the minstrel brother gave me one coin. But it's too big for me to carry. Carrying it around would be troublesome. So, reluctantly, I levitated the copper coin under the cushion in my birdcage. I can manage to float coins for one child's weight.

It seemed like the minstrel brother wanted to take me somewhere, so I followed along with the floating coin. We arrived at a hospital. There were many injured people. Perhaps it was after a disaster, considering the circumstances. Did the minstrel brother know that I could heal injuries?

When I went to the hospital in the southern town, I thought healing might not be the best idea. Relying too much on an individual's skills could be dangerous if that person is no longer around.

But well, I can't be heartless when there are people suffering right in front of me. Heal, heal, and heal. Oh? Just approaching healed them? Cheers erupted from the surroundings. Wait, did I just heal injuries by getting close? It seems that way. Interesting.

Even though I can heal by proximity, it's too troublesome to approach



each injured person individually. Magic for a group recovery, there we go. Yeah, yeah, it's good.

After healing the injuries, there was a commotion of joy in the hospital. Then, the maid in the carriage arrived to pick me up. Did they find out about my escape? Perhaps there was a scheduled plan? Escaping now would only postpone the inevitable, so I obediently boarded the carriage.

Clip-clop, clip-clop, the carriage moved westward. I thought we would return to the eastern fortress, but where are we going?

We crossed the large bridge in the center of the town. It looked even more enormous from the carriage than it did from above. The width of the road compared to the height was impressive. The sound of the wind was intense, and the flags spaced evenly along the bridge flapped noisily.

Huh? Are there markings on the flags? Oh, perhaps they indicate when the bridge is closed based on wind conditions. On a windy day, a tall, narrow bridge like this in a gorge could potentially blow away a carriage. There might be rules like that to prevent accidents.

I wanted to get off and peek under the bridge, but doing so might trigger the escape prevention bell again. I'll content myself with the view from the carriage.

The carriage continued across the bridge towards the western part of the town. I wondered where we were going.

Surprisingly, it was another hospital. Judging by the architecture, it seemed like the eastern and western parts of the town were independent. Perhaps they functioned as self-contained units, with hospitals and other facilities in both the east and west. People probably didn't travel between the eastern and western parts much in their daily lives.

So, after treating the injuries in the eastern hospital, it might be a good idea to do the same in the west to avoid potential complaints.

Alright, I'll heal, heal, and heal.

After that, we went to a soup kitchen and then to the site of collapsed buildings for reconstruction work. And thus, the day came to an end. Ah, so this outing was a consolation visit, not sightseeing.

I hid the received copper coins under the cushion in my birdcage.

# Chapter 134 - Flaws

The flaw of the Fairy Sword became apparent to me shortly after leaving the capital. It seemed to emit a strong magical presence continuously.

Since I couldn't sense magic myself, I didn't notice, but those who could sense magic were surprised at the towns I visited on my way to the southeast forest.

Despite my appearance being that of an ordinary swordsman, I apparently stood out significantly. The situation of a non-magician emanating powerful magic was considered abnormal.

In the capital, everyone who knew about me receiving the Fairy Sword treated me as a hero who had prevented the stampede. Perhaps that's why nobody mentioned the magical power of the Fairy Sword.

Additionally, it seemed that some magical creatures could also sense the magic. I didn't expect to encounter any magical creatures along the way, but when I deviated from the main road to earn some extra money, I witnessed weak magical creatures fleeing. This didn't happen before I received the Fairy Sword, so they were likely intentionally avoiding me due to the strong magical presence.

I need to consider how this flaw will affect me in the future. In the short term, there might be a few issues, such as trolls avoiding me. However, in the long run, various inconveniences could arise.

Firstly, covert operations with the Fairy Sword are impossible. Whether against humans or monsters, simply being present makes me conspicuous. Also, it might not be suitable for monster subjugation requests since the target might escape before I can even see it.

On the flip side, it could be useful for herb gathering or escort requests. I could safely complete requests without attracting magical creatures. If attacked, I have the power to counter.

Moreover, when I received the Fairy Sword, there were several warnings from the royal castle. Among them was a constraint not to take the Fairy Sword out of the country. I probably won't be able to accept requests that require me to go abroad in the future. Well, I've never left the country before.

Honestly, I'm filled with the desire to leave it somewhere, but I can't think of a trustworthy place nearby to leave the Fairy Sword. Having come this far, I have no choice but to continue carrying it. This sword is not suitable for everyday use. Once the requests are done, I'll buy a regular sword when I return to the capital.

However, the effects of the Fairy Sword are exceptionally outstanding. By swinging it with the intention of throwing gravel, gravel is thrown; if I swing without that intention, it becomes a normal slash. Furthermore, if I swing it without any specific thought, the sword seems to judge whether to throw gravel based on the situation. Generally, gravel is thrown, but in situations where it could be dangerous, the gravel won't appear.

It's so mysterious that I can't comprehend the principle. I just have to accept it as it is.

Trying to see what happens if I use the Fairy Sword with a different image in mind, I imagined scattering sand while swinging. The result was excellent; if I imagine a large rock, a rock falls. Imagining a wall and thrusting it into the ground causes a dirt wall to rise. There are limitations based on scale, but as long as it's a earth attribute, it seems quite versatile.

Retiring as an adventurer and spending my remaining days selling the stones I produce with this sword sounds appealing.

Then, I could leisurely enjoy a slow life, perhaps with some drinking. It sounds very attractive. Well, it's impossible. Even if I say I'm retiring now, the kingdom would probably allow it, but the adventurer guild wouldn't stay silent.

Although I aimed high in my youth, now that I've reached the top, I find myself thinking only about taking it easy.

Perhaps it's because the power I possess wasn't earned through my own efforts. I need to be careful not to get carried away... the words of an old senior come to mind: "Those who get carried away are the ones who end up dead."

With these thoughts in mind, I reached the last town. This should be the closest town to the southeast forest. Perhaps due to the nearby dangerous forest, the town was surrounded by sturdy stone walls that seemed disproportionate to its size.

Tonight, I'll stay here, gather information and prepare tomorrow, and if everything is in order, I'll head into the forest the day after tomorrow. Trolls are powerful humanoid monsters with high regenerative abilities, it seems. If I neglect preparation, I might experience some painful consequences.

Failure would mean the heads of the Fairy Lord Dolls produced in the future might end up completely bald.

# Chapter 135 - High Difficulty

“Hey, you there! Stop!”

I halted my steps in response to the gatekeeper’s shout. I had thought today would be as simple as entering the town and finding an inn, but it seemed like my plans were already going awry.

As I approached the town, it became evident that the area in front of the gates was heavily guarded, with soldiers gathering in what seemed like a strict defensive posture. There were also quite a few adventurers mixed in. I wondered if some incident had occurred.

Though there were others heading towards the town besides me, they seemed to be allowed in without any issues. I briefly thought they might only be stopping adventurers, but that didn’t seem to be the case.

“Stay still! Don’t move, okay!?”

They were really on high alert. I raised both hands to show I had no hostile intentions and waited as three soldiers and one mage approached.

“It seems the source of magic is that sword.”

“What? So, is this guy human?”

The mage pointed at the Fairy Sword from a certain distance and made a statement. Probably not a wizard. Their gear wasn’t suitable for combat. I’ve heard that in rural areas, individuals skilled in life magic, who are better at practical spells than others, might make a living from things like starting fires. They’re rarely seen in the capital, where most are recruited by the royal castle, but apparently, they exist occasionally in the countryside.

However, this was the first time I had been doubted about being human. I wondered if they had been on high alert because they sensed the magical power of the Fairy Sword approaching. Were they expecting an attack from a powerful magical creature?

“Where are you from?”

“The capital. I came on a request from the Adventurer’s Guild.”

“The capital? Could it be... a renowned adventurer?”

They didn’t ask about the details of the request. They probably knew there was a confidentiality requirement. But a renowned adventurer... now, how should I respond? Personally, it felt presumptuous to declare myself a renowned adventurer. However, it was a fact that I had contributed to the Stampede defense. Would it be bothersome to answer too humbly?

“Oh... Well, I think I contributed to the Stampede defense... but.”

How could I convey it smoothly? Not too humble, but also not to the point of sounding arrogant... Explaining things to people was really difficult.

“Oh, you participated in the Stampede defense in the capital! I heard a rumor that a single swordsman felled all the orcs in the Stampede. I thought it was an unreliable rumor, but with this magical power! The rumor was true!?”

Oh no, I might have caused a misunderstanding. I already had a bad feeling after visiting the church after the Stampede.

Some people who had taken refuge in the church had misunderstood and thought I, alone, had defeated all the creatures during the Stampede. I should have properly clarified the misunderstanding.

“Uh... no.”

“I apologize for stopping you. Now, let me guide you to the town.”

“Um...”

“Please, this way.”

I was later led into the town, somewhat carried along, and managed to part ways with the guards. I distanced myself from the watchful eyes of the soldiers and adventurers who had lined up in a strict formation, found an inn, and stayed the night.

The next morning, I bought the essential provisions like food and water and left the town almost as if fleeing. Gathering information in this town seemed too difficult for me. Not only was I already bad at talking, but exaggerated rumors made things unbearable. Also, due to the conspicuous magical presence of the Fairy Sword, I couldn't act inconspicuously.

But well, I'll manage somehow. I headed towards the forest where the trolls were rumored to be.



# Chapter 136 - Trolls

—Zash! Thud!

I dealt a fatal blow to one of the trolls and immediately sprinted away. Instead of retreating from the magical power of the Fairy Sword, the trolls were aggressively attacking.

Their massive, green, fur-covered bodies chased after me, making a rhythmic thudding sound. By the sounds of their footsteps, there were at least two of them. Glancing back, I noticed that the one I had fatally wounded earlier was starting to get back up. I knew they had high healing abilities, but this was beyond what I expected.

The request was not to defeat them but to collect their body hair. I initially thought I could just cut off one arm and be done with it, but it seemed I had to defeat them to safely collect the hair. If I cut off an arm and tried to collect the hair before dealing with the others, I'd likely be surrounded by multiple trolls. I had to lure and secure one to handle the situation.

However, the Fairy Sword was becoming a hindrance. Another troll approached from the front. Undoubtedly, the magical power of the Fairy Sword was acting as a beacon for them. If I continued like this, I would end up attracting a horde of trolls. I wanted to regroup, but some of them would undoubtedly follow me. There was no choice.

I turned to face the pursuing troll, entering a combat stance. Even with a fatal wound, they recovered quickly. Ideally, I wanted to finish them off with a single strike. But how could I defeat them? I should have gathered information in town.

Would they die if I cut off their heads? Let's give it a try.

The position of their head was just within my reach if I stretched my hand. To reach their neck with a slashing attack, they would either need to bend down, or I would have to jump. Normally, they wouldn't do either.

One troll, in pursuit, stepped forward, and in that moment, when its foot lifted off the ground, I aimed and threw a rock about the size of a hand. The rock hit the foot it kicked back, and the leg stretched farther than expected. In a panic, the troll tried to put its hand on the ground. By adding force in the direction the opponent was moving, you could destabilize them with less effort.

I swung as the upper body began to fall. Alongside the falling body, I severed the head. The Fairy Sword was truly sharp; the headless giant body fell to the ground with a loud thud. I threw another rock at the approaching troll to restrain its movements while observing the fallen body and the delayed falling head.

Would it regenerate? If it did, would the body grow a head, or would the head grow a body? Or perhaps, would both the head and body regenerate separately, creating two trolls? It seemed like it was dead.

But now, I was in trouble. Trolls from the surroundings had started to gather. There were now around ten of them. Perhaps they became more excited because their comrades had been defeated.

I judged it dangerous to approach carelessly, and the trolls watching from a distance began to throw various objects. I dodged what I could and used the Fairy Sword to deflect rocks that were hard to avoid. However, the rocks I threw were now being used as projectiles by the trolls. It might not be wise to release rocks carelessly.

I didn't want to create a wall with the Fairy Sword either. The walls created with this sword didn't disappear on their own.

If I created a wall and left it there, it might cause problems later. I had to avoid that.

Seeing some trolls nearby beginning to pick up rocks, I ran toward them. They attempted to hinder me, but I quickly threw sand as a distraction and, while at it, cut off one troll's leg as I ran through.

I thought I had escaped the encirclement, but there were quite a few trolls ahead. Moreover, it seemed there were people beyond them. There was a tunnel-like cave on the embankment ahead, and I caught

a glimpse of a figure. Local adventurers? It would be bad to go there. I might involve them.

I turned around and recklessly threw rocks while charging into the group of trolls. I sliced through those in my path and managed to get one arm from one of them. With this, I should have fulfilled the minimum requirements for the request.

All that remained was to leave the forest, eliminate those who chased me beyond the forest, and the mission would be complete.

After dealing with the trolls, I arrived outside the forest with only five in pursuit. If I understood their movement patterns and how to defeat them, there would be no problem. I swiftly defeated them, ensuring I could shave off the body hair from all five.

Hmm, it indeed resembled the hair of that fairy doll. If the buyers of those cute dolls knew that the hair of those dolls was from the fur of these rough giant monsters, I wonder what they would think.

Now, returning would mean reaching the town by night. Should I camp here tonight? Troll meat, being omnivores, wasn't said to be particularly tasty, but there was no other option. Tonight, it's troll meat.

# Chapter 137 - Superior Species

“Superior species? Has it already been born?”

“The abnormal magic power, there’s no mistake. It’s moving, so it must have already been born.”

A magician belonging to the unit responded anxiously.

“I see... Is it a prelude to a stampede?”

“I don’t know. But, defending this place seems difficult, doesn’t it?”

The magician’s face was pale. His gaze was fixed in the distance. Apparently, there was abnormal magic power in that direction. Normally, this guy exuded the typical arrogance of a magician, but now he looked like a timid rookie. Judging from his demeanor, it seemed a quite powerful individual had been born.

“It’s alright. They’re big; they can’t enter this tunnel.”

Uh-oh, this is bad. Panic is spreading. I need to calm things down before it affects other team members... The sound of multiple footsteps echoed from a distance. It seemed it wasn’t just one superior species; they were bringing along normal individuals too. Did they discover us? The surrounding team members were also starting to get restless.

“Calm down. First, temporarily block the tunnel. You know the procedure, right? Once blocked, we defend. Hurry.”

I issued instructions, trying not to raise my voice too much. Raising my voice might escalate panic, and that could lead to a complete disaster. I needed to calm down first; otherwise, the others wouldn’t calm down either.

Fortunately, this tunnel exit was designed to be easily sealed in case adventurers or others came in. Luckily, we managed to block it before the trolls arrived.

The sounds of trolls rampaging from outside could be heard. It wasn't just footsteps; there were loud, deep bass sounds, as if rocks were being thrown. In the dark tunnel, now sealed off, we waited in silence, patiently waiting for the sounds to fade away. Eventually, the noises moved further away. Did we manage to get through?

"Hey, is the magic power of the superior species still nearby?"

"No, it seems to have gone beyond the sensing range."

In the darkness where facial expressions couldn't be seen, the tone of the magician's voice sounded composed. It seemed we had overcome the immediate crisis.

"...Let's observe for a while. Scout, when the movements of the trolls settle down, go and confirm the position of the superior species. Don't get too close. Just confirm the location of the magic power. We don't know what might happen if we unnecessarily provoke it."

"Yes, sir."

In the subsequent investigation, it was found that the magic power of the superior species remained seated at the outer edge of the forest throughout the night, not moving. Why was the superior species at the forest's outer edge? Were they planning a stampede?

There were many unknowns, but first, a report had to be made to the homeland. A superior troll appearing at the exit of a cross-border tunnel, entering the kingdom through the tunnel is dangerous... and so on.

# Chapter 138 - From Allies

“What did you say? All the magic swords were stolen?”

“Hush. Your Highness, your voice is too loud.”

While transporting prisoners to the eastern border, I was surprised by the report from my aide. It seemed that some of the prisoners overheard and confirmed it. Damn.

The day after escaping through the sewer with a strange shield and successfully rescuing the missing investigation team and capturing the remaining imperial soldiers with the second knight division, we spent several days sealing the hole connecting the underground and sewage systems. We also installed new traps in case the hole was reopened. We had identified the entry points of the imperial soldiers and sealed them off.

Afterwards, since we couldn't fully grasp the extent of the traps left by the fairy fool, we decided to request an investigation from the Adventurer's Guild. So, the sewers are probably full of adventurers now.

During this brief respite, a demand for the handover of prisoners and a proposal for ransom payment came from the empire. Since it was revealed that imperial soldiers attacked the kingdom, various manipulations by the empire against the kingdom were exposed. There was no need to hide the actions of the nation anymore. Probably, they wanted to recover the prisoners for both replenishing their forces and gathering information.

After negotiations, arrangements were made to exchange prisoners and ransom at the border, and as the second prince, I was currently escorting the prisoners.

During this journey, a report came from my aide that the magic sword had been stolen. Was it the toy sword that the kids were playing with, or the fairy sword that mowed down imperial soldiers? If it was the

kids' sword, I already knew that.

There was no need to report that now. So, was it the fairy sword that was stolen? That would be very bad.

“Is that magic sword referring to the fairy sword?”

“—Yes.”

I asked my aide in a low voice, but the answer I received left me bewildered. And this confusion grew even larger with the report the next day.

“Your Highness, His Majesty’s condition has suddenly deteriorated.”

“What!? He seemed perfectly fine just the other day!”

“Hush, your voice is too loud. It seems that the wound from the assassin suddenly worsened...”

“Seriously... Is it a matter of life and death?”

“It’s a pretty dangerous situation.”

During the few days I stayed in the capital, Father appeared healthier than ever. While not as dramatically rejuvenated as Mother, who was clearly affected by the fairy fool, Father’s skin was glowing. Even his broad forehead was shining beautifully. And now, suddenly, he was in critical condition? I had never heard that he was slashed during the attack.

Furthermore, the next day, the aide brought another unexpected report.

“Your Highness, the fairy lord has gone missing in the northern lands...”

“For real!? Was she abducted, or did she voluntarily disappear?”

“I don’t have details, but the fairy lord wouldn’t be easily captured. It’s highly likely she left on her own accord.”

“For real...”

Unexpected reports kept coming, causing confusion. Each report had the potential to greatly impact the future. The response to the empire also needed to be reconsidered.

While thinking about that, the aide discreetly handed me a small piece of paper. When I unfolded it and read its contents, it was written in Mother’s handwriting.

The three reports you received are lies to deceive the prisoners.

You’re not good at acting, so I also contributed to the deception.

Once you finish reading this, burn and dispose of this paper immediately.

Damn! So, the fairy sword wasn’t stolen, Father is perfectly healthy, and that fairy fool is enjoying the sea, huh? Give me back my worries!

Mother had said in the meeting not to spread rumors about the theft of the magic sword. They had already tried to deceive me from that point. Then deliberately let the prisoners hear false reports during the handover, planning to spread misinformation to the empire.

They want to make the stolen kids’ toy sword appear to be the real fairy sword. Come to think of it, they said all the enemies attacking Father were killed, so the prisoners wouldn’t know about Father’s condition. Moreover, whether fairies who aren’t in the capital are missing or not, the prisoners can’t confirm. Damn it, I can act decently too!



Still drifting down the river on a small boat, taking several days to visit various towns, greeting noble-looking people, having recovery magic cast, and inspecting disaster scenes.

The towns I visited after that weren't as large as the city around the castle where I usually lived or the fortress city I visited first. Towns of a certain size tend to have their own characteristics, but towns below a certain size all seemed unremarkable.

However, as I traveled north, I felt that the cityscape was gradually changing. I can't specify how it's different, but the atmosphere is changing. I wonder why? Maybe the architecture of the buildings is slightly different?

Due to each town discharging sewage into the river, the water becomes dirtier as we go downstream. However, with familiarity, the smell becomes less bothersome after a few days on the boat. When staying in a town and returning to the boat, I'm reminded of the river's smell. Oh well, it stinks after all.

The width of the river is widening, and from the boat, it looks more like a lake than a river. At this point, there are hardly any bridges, and crossing the river becomes a ferry ride. Therefore, boats going back and forth along the river intersect with ferries crossing the river. It's surprising they don't collide often. Occasionally, they make clashing sounds like cymbals, maybe exchanging information through sound?

While traveling on the boat, the birdcage maid continued to try teaching me words. Since I vomited on the first day due to motion sickness, initially, she taught me words like playing a card game. By now, I've learned a few words. Hehehe, it seems I'm a prodigy who can learn unknown languages.

After several days on the boat, I've gotten used to it, partly understood the language, and being floating prevents the effects of the swaying. Now, even if I'm read a picture book, I don't get seasick.

Thus, for the past few days, picture book reading sessions, similar to

the first day, have resumed. Stories of a hero setting out to defeat the Demon King, a prince riding a bird defeating a dragon, mostly adventurous tales. Is it the birdcage maid's preference? Today's story is about fairies. Probably a new one she acquired in the last town. It feels like a brand-new one just created.

The story of the picture book is about a fairy who came to a castle one day and saved the town from a legion of monster pigs. The town was being attacked by a legion of pig-faced macho warriors, and when all hope seemed lost, the fairy received divine protection, teamed up with a swordsman, an archer, and a mage, and single-handedly defeated the pig-faced machos, saving the town with a happy ending. The fairy didn't boast about their achievements but continued to watch over the people. The end.

If it were me, I would brag about those achievements. I would demand rewards naturally. Besides, the fairy in the picture book is quite silly. It's good to give a sword to a human swordsman, but the sword given is fairy-sized. As a result, the swordsman has to fight monsters with a toothpick-like sword. The most exciting battle scene is ruined by a toothpick.

It reminds me of the bar guy who was rewarded with a sword. But the swordsman in the picture book is a young handsome guy. Quite different from the middle-aged bar guy. By the way, I could grasp the content of the picture book not because I understood the language, but through inference from the pictures. Well, I think I didn't make many mistakes.

The shocking fact I learned from this picture book is that Asheerla wasn't my name. It's quite surprising. It seems Asheer means fairy. In other picture books and cards, all fairies were named Asheerla, so it's confirmed it's not a personal name.

The suffix "li" or "la" is probably an honorific.

In other words, I've been called Fairy-sama all this time. And I wasn't given a nickname or alias by the people in town, just called a fairy. Grr...

While having the picture book read to me, the scent of the sea gradually becomes stronger. I think we'll reach the sea today or tomorrow, and when I'm thinking that, in the afternoon, the sea, and beyond it, a port town comes into view.

Approaching the port town, it's already dusk, and the world is dyed completely yellow. Only black silhouettes of the town are visible. Since the sun is in the west while we're heading north, the sea doesn't glitter, but the completely yellow scenery is quite magnificent. Even the usually calm apprentice maid is excited according to her age. The crew members start bustling around. It's about time to anchor.

Well then, what kind of town is the port town?

# Chapter 140 - The Sea

After Siluela-san finished reading the picture book to Fairy-sama, she moved on to paperwork. Following that, I would wipe Fairy-sama's body, making sure she was clean. This has become a daily routine when spending the night on the boat.

However, these actions might not have any significance. That's because the water prepared to wipe Fairy-sama becomes cleaner after use. So, it's unclear whether we are cleansing Fairy-sama or purifying the water. Since Fairy-sama is always clean, there might be no need to wipe her.

One of the crew members once suggested washing Fairy-sama with the river water to purify the water after wiping her.

No, it's not a joke. Washing Fairy-sama with such dirty water is unacceptable.

Some crew members even tried to drink the water that became clean after wiping Fairy-sama, but I strongly opposed this as well. They wanted to try if it would upset their stomachs or not, and there seemed to be many ways to utilize the water.

However, it's too perverse for a woman to drink water used for washing. That crew member should probably keep a distance from Fairy-sama.

This boat journey had various experiences, but it seems we are approaching the port town without any major problems.

On the first day in the former Bastille Capital, Fairy-sama suddenly disappeared, but since then, she has accommodated us according to our needs.

The former Bastille Capital was governed by the former Duke of Bastille, who was captured for defying the monarchy.

Therefore, the residents had complex feelings towards the monarchy. Initially, the gaze towards the royal carriage was quite cold.

Due to the betrayal by their lord, the residents have already suffered from rumors, such as being charged high prices when traveling and being avoided when trading. Furthermore, since Fairy-sama is perceived as a factor that led to the capture of the former Duke of Bastille, she wasn't initially welcomed. However, with Fairy-sama's dedicated efforts, she became extremely popular by the time we left the former Bastille Capital. Truly, she is Fairy-sama.

By the way, it seems the former Bastille Capital is going to change its name, but I still don't know it. The residents also seemed unaware.

On the scheduled day of arrival at the port town, Siluela-san was reading a picture book to Fairy-sama again. The story in the picture book was about Fairy-sama saving the kingdom of Stampede. After the Stampede incident, the guild master of the Commerce Guild was so excited about making a picture book, but I didn't expect it to be finished so quickly.

There was a dispute in the picture book about the fairy's sword used by adventurers being made small or made human-sized for better reception by children. During that time, the guild master insisted on not bending the fairy's intentions and pushed through making a small sword. I also think that was better.

Fairy-sama was looking at the picture book with great interest, but I couldn't understand what she was thinking. The wise and thoughtful thoughts of Fairy-sama are beyond my understanding.

The guild master of the Commerce Guild planned to make more picture books featuring Fairy-sama, but it was rejected due to the imposed gag order on events like the attack on the royal castle. Currently, they are looking for children saved by Fairy-sama to use as material for a story. Also, during the winter, they plan to hold a play featuring Fairy-sama. Since there are few entertainments during the winter when snow closes off many activities, it will likely be a significant event.

The reconstruction of the royal capital is also progressing. Before the Harvest Festival, they want to decorate it with Fairy-sama. I heard

that statues of Fairy-sama will be placed on both sides of the city gate. I'm looking forward to returning.

While we were talking, we received a message that the sea was visible. Going out on the deck, the crew members pointed and showed me.

"Oh, miss. Over there. That's the sea."

"Thank you."

The boundary between the sky and the sea is clearly divided in a straight line. I heard it's vast, but I can't quite grasp it.

There's a unique fragrance carried by the wind. Is this the scent of the sea? It was said that one would be deeply moved when seeing the sea for the first time, so I had expectations, but it doesn't quite hit me.

It was somewhat disappointing when seen from a distance. After working on board and going back to the deck just before disembarking, I was overwhelmed by its size.

"Wow...!"

Is all of this water? If we had this water before Fairy-sama arrived, wouldn't my home territory, struggling in poverty, have been... No, the sea's water can't be used for agriculture, and it's undrinkable.

The sound of the waves is entirely different from the river. In the river, in places with gentle flow, it sounded like splish-splash, splish-splash. In fast-flowing areas, it was more like jabber-jabber, jabber-jabber, shhh. But the sea goes whoosh, whoosh.

I can't clearly see the color due to the sunset. I heard it's blue, but it looks yellow. But they say it's transparent when you draw it. It's mysterious.

Suddenly feeling a gaze, I look to the side, and Fairy-sama is observing me with keen interest.

# Chapter 141 - Request

After spending a night outside the forest, when I was about to return to the town, I realized a problem. The fur of five trolls and an additional arm's worth was bulkier than I had anticipated. Since it didn't fit into the bag I brought, I had no choice but to tie it with a rope and attach it to my body.

To transport troll fur to the capital, a wheelbarrow or something similar would be necessary. Renting one would be cheaper than buying, but considering the difficulty of returning it all the way here, purchasing seemed like the only option. This meant I needed funds for the purchase, so I decided to skin one troll and pack its skin into a bag. Given its size, it could be turned into parchment for map-making and would likely fetch a good price.

I buried the remaining troll bodies. If done manually, it would be quite a task, but with the help of the earth fairy sword, it would be done in no time.

Returning to town, I noticed the town gate was once again on high alert. They were probably wary of the magic power of the fairy sword. Since I had seen this situation on the way in, I thought the misunderstanding would be quickly resolved, and I let my guard down. That was a mistake; arrows came flying.

"Trolls! Trolls are approaching the town!"

I heard the desperate shout of the gatekeeper. Oh no, it seems they mistook me for a troll because I had tied troll fur to my body. Fortunately, at this distance, avoiding the arrows was easy. To clear up the misunderstanding, I needed to get closer, so I ran towards the town, dodging arrows.

"Troll approaching! It's fast!"

"Raise your shields! Surround it and stop its movement!"



Trouble. If they manage to stop my movement, I'll be attacked from all sides. I'm not good at raising my voice, but in this situation, I couldn't help it. I reluctantly shouted to clear up the misunderstanding.

"Wait! I'm human! Calm down!"

"Wh-what? It spoke!"

"Could it be that adventurer from earlier...?"

"Is it really human? Show us proof!"

In response, I quickly untied the troll fur from my body. I untied enough to reveal my upper body and raised my hands to signal that I was human.

"W-well, well. Wasn't it the adventurer from the capital? Why are you dressed like this again?"

"...It's a troll fur collection request."

I had to maintain confidentiality about the request, but in this situation, not answering would be too suspicious. With a wry smile, I approached the soldiers who had come closer.

Concerned about me entering the town in this state, they brought a wheelbarrow to the outskirts of the town. Despite some commotion, I managed to reach the adventurer's guild in the town. I thought that selling the troll skins would be the end of my business with this town, but it seems I can't leave just yet.

"Welcome to Elrn Town. I am the guild master of this town's adventurer guild."

"...I'm Duster. I came from the capital."

Adventurers are not often called by the guild master, especially in a non-base town. It's uncommon to see the guild master of a town that is not a base. I wonder why I was summoned. Perhaps a complaint about me approaching the town with troll fur tied to me?

"Let's get straight to it, Duster-kun. I want you to take on a confidential request."

"...I'd like to refuse. I'm currently on another request... and I have bulky luggage."

"Yes, I know. It's a troll fur collection request, right? We'll take care of the completion procedures here. We'll also transport the fur to the capital. Is that okay?"

It's quite forceful. In situations like this, adventurers don't have the right to refuse if the guild is this pushy. Well, I guess I have no choice but to accept. However, I don't want to get too involved, especially in a confidential request.

"...What is the request?"

"Well, it's an investigation of the Empire's border routes. It seems the Empire is slipping through the kingdom's border defenses and entering. The investigation is about how the Empire is infiltrating the kingdom."

I see, that's why they're asking me. The details of the Empire's attack are classified, and it's not a request that can be given to other adventurers. Moreover, I already know that the capital was attacked by the Empire. I can't refuse this. But why entrust this to an adventurer?

"...Isn't that the job of the kingdom's soldiers? Shouldn't adventurers not intervene in national matters?"

"That's easier said than done. Of course, the kingdom's soldiers and

the private troops of the eastern nobles are all involved in the investigation. However, the border is long. Can you imagine investigating it all thoroughly?”

“...I understand. But it’s too vague. Should I wander endlessly through the forest seeking Empire soldiers? Just to clarify, it’s impossible to act in the forest for days. There are too many trolls.”

“Finding just traces would be enough. Unusual camping sites with an impossible number of people, or Imperial garbage, which is rare in the kingdom. If moving in the forest is difficult, you can just go around the outskirts of the forest.”

“...Even if I find nothing, it counts as completing the request?”

“Yes, that’s fine.”

“...I understand. I’ll check the outskirts from the north to the south.”

“Good. I’m counting on you, Duster-kun.”

“...Got it. I’ll take care of the outskirts.”

Since there’s no right to refuse anyway, and I can fulfill the request without entering the forest or finding anything, I’ll go along with it. After selling the troll skins to buy supplies, it’s time to depart. But I won’t be able to return to the capital until after the Garm period.

# Chapter 142 - Operation

“How did it go?”

“Well, it seems that it’s gradually moving along the outskirts of the forest.”

“I see. Is it indeed an upper-class troll?”

“Probably. It’s accompanied by ordinary trolls, and other creatures seem to avoid the group of trolls. It’s safe to say it’s an upper-class troll.”

“Good. Everyone gather. I’ll convey the instructions from the headquarters. The creature with abnormal magic power that attacked four days ago will now be referred to as a unique individual.”

Although we temporarily lost sight of the unique individual after being attacked by a creature with abnormal magic power the day after, subsequent investigations revealed that it was gradually moving along the northeastern side of the forest’s outskirts. In other words, it was persistently lingering in the forest as the leader. And, it appears to be an upper-class troll.

A strategy from the front-line command was communicated for execution once confirmation of the accuracy of this information was obtained.

“Gather around. We’ll take advantage of the darkness of the Garm period to lure the unique individual to the town of Elrn and trigger a stampede. Note that there will be no reinforcements.”

The team members began to stir. Naturally, this was expected. If we fail, we become prey to the trolls. Even if we successfully trigger a stampede, being discovered by the kingdom without reinforcements is risky.

“First, leave a portion of the team here. The others will leave the forest avoiding the unique individual on the night before the Garm period. On the first day of the Garm period, bait the unique individual and lead it to the town without the trolls catching up. This will trigger a stampede. If successful, we’ll smear the trolls on the town and then withdraw without being found by the kingdom. Return to this forest, block the border tunnel from the inside, head back to the empire once, and then reunite with the main force. Understood?”

“If we block this tunnel, does that mean the plan to attack the kingdom from here is canceled? What have we been defending here for so long?...”

One of the team members voiced their dissatisfaction. It was a natural discontent; after all, we had been defending this place for a year.

“Plans change. Now that the unexpected situation of the emergence of the unique individual has occurred, you understand the need for a plan change, right? Also, this tunnel has already played its role sufficiently. We sent in the imperial attack units and spies from here. It’s not a waste to have defended this place. Besides, even if we block it, it doesn’t mean it can’t be used.”

“But is it necessary to trigger a stampede?”

“Now that we can’t slip through the kingdom’s border defense forces, we have no choice but to face the kingdom head-on in the attack. Naturally, the kingdom has placed its main force on border defense. However, we didn’t initially plan to confront this kind of opponent. A direct confrontation will be a tough battle. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

“In that case, we’ll trigger a stampede behind the kingdom’s border defense forces. If successful, the kingdom will not only face us but will also be forced to deal with the stampede. They’ll have to allocate a part of their forces to Elrn town.

Even if the kingdom abandons Elrn, it doesn’t matter. We can still chip

away at the kingdom's strength to some extent."

"What if the kingdom abandons Elrn?"

"That doesn't matter. We can still weaken the kingdom's strength to some extent."

"What if we fail?"

"Failure is inevitable. If the team that guides the unique individual doesn't return by noon the next day, the remaining team should block the tunnel and reunite with the main force."

The faces of the team members turned dark. The empire is willing to discard us, assuming that the tunnel is no longer usable. If successful, we'll deal a blow to the kingdom with the stampede and make the tunnel usable again. Even if we fail, if we can move the unique individual away from the forest, the tunnel will still be usable.

"This operation will significantly change the empire's chances of winning. The details of the operation are not too complicated. The key is to run through with all our might to avoid being caught by the trolls. I pray for everyone's success. If we get through this, we can finally return to the empire. Got it?"

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Give me a more spirited response! Understood?"

"Understood!"

"Good, dismissed!"

This is the critical moment. Some of us here will definitely die.

However, I won't let it be in vain.

# Chapter 143 - Port Town

Waking up in the morning and looking out the window, I marveled at the panoramic ocean view. This must be what they call a full ocean view. Last night, when I looked out, the view beyond the window was a pitch-black scene, but in the morning, the sea looked incredibly beautiful. It's hard to believe that this is a place where sewage is constantly discharged.

Last night, after arriving in the port town by boat, we stayed overnight in a carriage at the noble's mansion. Most of the nobles I had met in other towns were pale and plump, but the nobles here were dark-skinned, dandy, and slightly muscular. They might say things like "Checkera." The mansion we are currently in is Mr. Checkera's mansion, the Checkera House.

For dinner, it was mostly fish dishes during the latter part of this excursion. The fish slices were cut into my size, but as I ate, they would break down along the bones. In the end, it turned into a stick-like shape, similar to imitation crab sticks.

I had the impression that fish dishes were soft, but each bone had quite a bit of elasticity. It was like eating shellfish.

Maybe the reason humans perceive fish dishes as soft is that when you chew, the connections between the bones break down?

While contemplating this, it's nice to just stare blankly at the sea. The town is built in a stair-like manner along the seaside, and the Checkera House stands out in a high position. So, the sea is well visible from the window.

I was expecting an emerald green sea, but overall, it's a deep blue, resembling the sea in Japan. I wished for a sea like an emerald green tropical resort where you can see the seabed, but I can't be too demanding. This isn't a tropical place, and judging from the size of the ships that can dock, the depth seems considerable. On top of that, discharging sewage into the sea makes emerald green unrealistic. Still,



the sea is beautiful, and it's a stunning view.

I thought there might be another sea to the south, but there was a very high mountain there. Even if I go south, I doubt there's a sea.

While gazing at the sea, the apprentice maid also stood by the window, gazing at the ocean. Hmm, there are some places where the color of the sea surface is different, or it looks slippery. I wonder why. Ah, if you look closely, there are no waves in those areas. Maybe it's due to the terrain. Or perhaps there's a sea current there.

I can see ships near the shore, but none in the open sea. The ship I came on didn't have something like a compass, so maybe this world lacks the technology to sail into the open sea. Or perhaps there are monsters in the sea that prevent going out into the open. In this different world, it's a possibility, considering there are monsters on land. Is the lack of technology preventing them from going into the open sea, or is the inability to go into the open sea preventing technological development? Well, it doesn't matter.

After breakfast, we left the Checkera House in a carriage and headed towards the coast. Come to think of it, it's quite a hard schedule. It's like a package tour that squeezes in as many tourist spots as possible into a short itinerary. The maid, also known as the tour guide, explained various things while pointing outside the carriage. I don't understand what she's saying, but well, understanding when it comes to forming sentences is a different issue. It's like asking a Japanese child who just finished studying English at school if they can understand an English listening test for university entrance exams.

So, I'll just nod casually. It's dangerous to nod to Mr. Ojii-leader, but it should be okay with Maid-in-the-Cage.

With that, the carriage descended towards the sea along the river. I thought the damage from the upstream river flow would increase as we got closer to the sea, but it seems that the town closer to the sea has less damage. I couldn't find many damaged areas in this port town. Maybe because it's closer to the sea, the countermeasures are perfect.

We passed by a place like a fish market, but it was skipped. After that, we went to the hospital for treatment as usual, and then we were taken to the shipyard where ships were under construction. There were many shipbuilders putting planks on the framework of the ship. When we entered the dock, everyone gathered around.

The shipbuilders who gathered around us seemed to be happy, patting their bodies or turning their arms around. This reaction is similar to the patients in the hospital who were healed. Perhaps these shipbuilders had some physical discomfort, and it got better because I approached. That makes sense. Should I let them worship me?

We went outside, and we were guided along the seaside. There were some adults diving for fish, but most of those swimming were children. I rarely saw adults in swimsuits enjoying a vacation in the water. Can maids in birdcages swim?

I think swimsuits would definitely suit them. No, before that, does this world have swimsuits?

Oh, I found a beautiful stone shining in seven colors! Hmm, it's stick-shaped, but is this a shell? Let's bring it back as a souvenir. For the adults like Door-Up-sama, and the men like Blondie and Hero-kun, it might be a bit ambiguous, but a silver-haired girl like a child might be happy. Oh, is there another one? Found it found it. Hmm, the sizes are uneven.

Let's process it a bit.

Adjust the sizes, and while we're at it, let's make it shiny since it looks a bit dull. Hmm, it doesn't shine as much as I thought. Let's forcefully make it shine more. And then, like this! Hehe, the earring is complete.

After that, we went around with the maid and visited the souvenir shops in the port town. If I casually point to a seemingly good souvenir, they'll buy it for me. Truly the budget of a castle! Hmm, a miniature figurine of this town. Bought it!

Wow, a big model of a bird! Bought it! There were some things I didn't quite understand mixed in, but it's okay. It's better to have them than not.

After enjoying the port town for about three days, we set out on our way back. There was no beach vacation with an emerald green sea, but it was quite fun.

Farewell, port town! Farewell, Checkera nobles! The castle is waiting for me, yo!

# Chapter 144 - Bird Model

Returning home by going up the river. When we arrived, it already felt quite autumnal, and now it's unmistakably autumn.

In the northern areas, the river was too wide to get a good view of the surroundings, but as we headed south, the river narrowed, and I noticed that the harvest of crops had already begun. Depending on the location, there were places where

the harvest hadn't started yet, and fields of what I think were wheat were golden. When sailing through those areas on the boat, it felt like floating in a sea of gold.

The boat was moving against the flow of the river, but the crew seemed to be struggling. They were pulling ropes extending from the sails and making adjustments that I didn't quite understand. Instead of going straight up the river, they were progressing diagonally, and the muscular magic user of the wind was also working hard.

After going quite far south, from one of the towns, the ship was anchored with a rope, and horses were used to pull it up the river in one go. Some other ships also had ropes attached and were being pulled from the land, but when our ship passed by, they prioritized us. Truly the ship of the castle, given the top priority with the power of authority.

Since they weren't rowing, I think they could achieve more speed if they put more effort into it. I might have underestimated the ships of this era.

And so, during the return journey when I got bored of studying, I was working on modifying a bird model. This large white bird model, bought as a souvenir, had movable wings and neck. I felt like with a bit more modification, I could make it fly.

At first, I mobilized my limited knowledge of aerodynamics. I changed the shape of the wings and threw it into the air, repeating the process

of failure and correction. However, it didn't seem to work well with my amateur knowledge. The flight was at most like a poor-quality glider. I felt like the shape of the wings and lift were important, but it wasn't going smoothly.

Although I reinforced it initially, it didn't break when it fell. However, I kept throwing it from the top of the mast, and it kept falling on the deck. Because the bird model didn't break, it was just for fun, and the deck was scratched. I fixed the deck properly since the crew was looking at me with amazing eyes.

While repeating such trial and error, I eventually got tired and started injecting magical power from below the wings. It flew, but the output was too strong, and it went far away from the ship, making it difficult to retrieve.

After that, since it's troublesome for magical power to be constantly emitted, I decided to add an on/off function. I opened a hole at the base of the bird's neck, and by inserting a Door-Up copper coin, it would take off. After a minute, the coin would be ejected, and the bird would stop.

Alright, alright, I managed to complete it somehow before reaching the city of the castle. Let's name it Checkera, as it was a bird bought in Checkera's port town. Retrieving Checkera after it flew and the copper coin proved to be a bit difficult, but for now, it can't be helped. I'll improve on that if I have time.

The development of the Checkera involved not only the Birdcage Maid and the apprentice maid but also the crew and the knights of the escort who watched over. They looked extremely interested, and when I taught them that injecting a Door-Up copper coin would make it fly, they were surprised.

While all this was happening, the ship advanced splashing water, and finally, the city of the castle came into view. The final destination. However, something feels off. Something is strange. I thought it might be my imagination, but as we approached the city, I realized that the discomfort was not my imagination.

Oh, no! There are super giant statues of me standing on both sides of the city gate! People entering the city are stopping to look up at the super giant statue of me, and it's become a tourist spot!? This is embarrassing!

The super giant statue of me is higher than the city wall. It seems to be attached to the former lookout platform. A lookout platform protrudes from the top of the head. And it looks down on the people passing by with an incredibly loving smile.

It's incredibly embarrassing, but depending on how you look at it, did I rank up from the royal pet to the city mascot? It's like a local character under full production. There might be jobs like public relations ambassadors or tourism goodwill ambassadors. The fee is high, you know? My fee. Please go through the Birdcage Maid Manager.

People who noticed me in the carriage descending from the ship cheered. Yeah, yeah, it's been a while since I felt a welcoming atmosphere. This city really loves me too much! But still, it's amazing how they can spot a small me inside the carriage.

Well, there were some unexpected things, but it finally feels like I've come back home.

# Chapter 145 - Test Ride

The souvenirs bought in the port town were distributed among us almost immediately. Since we didn't really think about which souvenir was for whom, it was convenient that we distributed them among ourselves. Oh, everyone seemed so delighted that it almost turned into a scramble. It's good, it's good.

I had prepared the seashell earrings specifically for Silver-Haired-chan, so I happily put them on her. Oh, it's good, it's good. Even though she's a child, she's of the royal family, so I suddenly became worried just before giving them, wondering if she wouldn't be happy with seashell accessories. Yeah, yeah.

The only miscalculation was that the bird model "Checkera" that I bought for myself also seemed to fall under the category of souvenirs and was apparently distributed by King Flash-sama. I was thinking, "Hmm, where's my bird model?" and then the next morning, I found everyone gathered, trying to fly the bird model. I can't just say, "That's mine!" at this point, and if they wanted it that much, well, I guess I can give it away.

So, now I'm observing from a distance the group of important people surrounding Checkera. Instead of just flying it normally, for some reason, King Flash-sama was attempting to take off into the sky on Checkera.

No matter how big Checkera is, it's too small for a person to ride. The wingspan is about the size of an adult man's outstretched arms from end to end, but the torso is only about the size of a skateboard or snowboard. King Flash-sama is standing diagonally on the torso, somewhat crouched. Seriously? If Checkera takes off like that, he'll definitely fall.

Anyway, I'll stand ready to help immediately.

As everyone watched, the minister who is always with King Flash-sama, Minister Kako, inserted a copper coin.

Immediately, Checkera was filled with magical power! Oh, Minister Kako was blown away!! Quickly, recover, recover.

Oh, King Flash-sama, amazing! He's standing on Checkera, which is moving quite fast! Wow, what agility! With that kind of agility, it's understandable that he would want to try riding a bird. And he's not just sitting there. He's trying to turn by shifting his weight. He's trying hard to come back here! Amazing, it's beyond human capabilities.

Sometimes I think, people in this world have such great agility. But I never thought that someone like King, who always sits, would be able to master high-speed skyboarding.

But unfortunately, time's up. The ejected copper coin hit King Flash-sama right in the groin, and he tumbled down!

Quickly, recover, recover. Let's bring him back to where everyone is...

Um, where did Checkera go? Oh, it's stuck in the castle wall. But it's not my fault, so I don't know anything. I just left and went into town.

The town has changed quite a bit, even before going to the sea. Fairy-themed decorations are everywhere in the city. And there seem to be many tourists. Quite a few people are pointing at me in surprise. Yeah, yeah, I'm a real fairy, peace, peace.

Previously, the fairy goods at the souvenir shop were only fairy seal cookies, but now there are various other fairy goods.

There is a music box with a carved fairy motif on the lid, which the old leader brought to the castle before. In other words, is all the sales going to the old leader?

There are also new variations I've never seen before, and there's even a music box with a three-dimensional fairy sitting on it. There are many fairy-themed accessories in the jewelry store. And fairy-themed gardening tools seem to be mainstream. Well, it feels like they are determined to make a profit with fairies. I feel like I'm being told that I'm welcome here, so I'm fine with it.



I decide to visit the adventurer's guild after a long time. A receptionist small guy is sitting at a seat that looks like it's for important people, doing paperwork. Yeah, the receptionist small guy is not just a receptionist but an important person. It seems the muscle monster and the slightly chubby person are not around. Oh, they noticed me. Is it really necessary to be so surprised?

When I go to the first floor, the alcohol guy who is usually there is not present. Instead, there are many adventurers I haven't seen before. It's unusual for there to be so many people at this time. Portraits and full-body pictures of a man are posted on the wall. It wasn't there before, right? Is he a wanted person? Nationwide wanted?

While I'm looking around absentmindedly, someone's hand suddenly reaches out. Huh, are they trying to catch me? I quickly avoid it, and a scuffle breaks out between the adventurer trying to catch me and another adventurer trying to stop them. Why? The receptionist small guy also rushes out, and it becomes quite a commotion. Oh no, let's escape.

Flying out of the adventurer's guild, I notice that the flow of people is heading towards the church. I hadn't approached the church since the commotion with CC Sisi the priest, so I decided to go and see. When I arrived, I found a mountain of crops.

Ah, is this some kind of harvest festival? Since it involves offering crops to the gods in autumn, it's probably a harvest festival. I see, I see...

In other words, it's another festival!

# Chapter 146 - A Sincere Smile

“——That’s all regarding the North.”

“Understood.”

Upon receiving the report, my wife offered a nod of acknowledgment. I had already conveyed the pertinent details through my nod. During the victory celebration following the stampede, suspicions arose that nobles from the Northern Alliance had been brainwashed. As a result, investigations were conducted alongside the fairy palace’s condolence visit to the North. It appears our suspicions were well-founded.

It was discovered that they had been subjected to a gradual form of brainwashing through a combination of psychotropic drugs and magical manipulation. The brainwashing had been executed meticulously over an extended period, remaining undetected until it was countered by the fairy palace’s enchantments.

It’s likely the Empire’s doing, yet it’s surprising they possess such skilled mages. Except for the Western Enderia, the abilities of mages across other nations were generally thought to be comparable.

Nevertheless, the brainwashing of the Northern Alliance has been reversed. Fairy tea began circulating among the nobility of the North. In a society where being out of fashion is scorned, it has become unthinkable for nobles not to indulge in fairy tea. Even for financially strained nobles who couldn’t afford it, we subtly facilitated their access under the guise of lucky chances. While it might not have reached every noble, it was crucial that the key figures, particularly the leaders, were freed from the brainwashing.

“Next, concerning the tasks entrusted to the Adventurers’ Guild, both the suppression of thieves and mapping of the underground structures have been completed. The details are as outlined in the materials distributed earlier.”

It was revealed that the recent surge in thefts was orchestrated by the Empire, employing adventurers in their scheme.

These thieves had effectively disrupted communications between the capital and the borderlands. Understanding their locations, thanks to our adventurers, meant all major routes were secured, a significant advantage before the impending decisive battle. Mapping the underground structures referred to understanding the enchantments placed by the fairy palace within the sewers.

“We were told that the iron grates could be moved, making infiltration difficult. However, we’ve learned to exploit the timing of these grates disappearing, allowing us to breach restricted areas. Therefore, new iron grates will be installed at the locations indicated on the map you’ve been provided. Installation is planned during the Harvest Festival, aiming for completion before the Garm period.”

“And there’s no risk of these new grates moving?”

“Likely not. It seems only a portion of the grates are mobile. Still, as a precaution, we should observe for a day after sealing the area.”

“Understood.”

The new sub-master of the Adventurers’ Guild has proven unexpectedly competent. The appointment of a rookie receptionist as the sub-master was likely a jab from the guild headquarters due to the national disputes we inadvertently embroiled the adventurers in. Despite the unanticipated selection, the results have been commendable. Even in the absence of the guild master, they’ve managed to meet all demands from the royal castle.

Sending the adventurers, bolstered by the fairy palace, to patrol the border forest was a strategic move. It was, perhaps, a nudge from my wife. Utilizing the pretext of collecting troll fur, we dispatched capable adventurers to the troll-infested borders and incorporated them into border security.

While we’re yet to identify the Empire’s point of infiltration, should their main force venture into the forest, a single adventurer would be

ineffective. However, with the fortified capabilities of those enhanced by the fairy palace wielding fairy swords, even one could make a substantial difference. I've personally witnessed the fairy palace's enhancement, after all.

The Empire aimed to sow discord within the Royal Capital's Adventurers' Guild by appointing the rookie receptionist as sub-master. Their intent was likely to exploit this friction to induce dysfunction. However, we had subtly infused a minimal amount of fairy tea during the farewell party for the former guild master. Although the trace amounts didn't reverse the brainwashing, they did alleviate tensions, reducing the palpable discord.

"Furthermore, regarding the spy capable of invisibility, it appears they attempted re-entry into the capital. The guards recognized them from the wanted poster sketch but lost sight as they vanished. We've sealed the gates and intensified patrols within the capital, but it's uncertain if they've infiltrated."

"It matters not. There's no defense against such invisibility. Just the understanding that we're aware of the spy's appearance should suffice to restrict their movements."

"Indeed."

The revelation of a spy with invisibility capabilities was unsettling. Immediate countermeasures were deliberated upon.

Fortunately, a solution was proposed: sprinkling murky water to reveal them. However, it wasn't foolproof.

"We've also erected flags at the city gates. If something passes through without disturbing the flags, it indicates a possible passage by an invisible spy. Although it's not flawless, it adds another layer of security."

"Very well."

"Lastly," the Prime Minister began, examining a bird model. The maid

had mentioned that the fairy palace had meticulously modified a model purchased from a port town to fly.

“A flying bird model... it seems the fairy princess took the trouble to prepare it. Undoubtedly, it will prove essential in the future.”

“Even if it flies for only a short duration? It can’t be used for transmitting information.”

“It’s quite substantial; humans might even ride it with some effort.”

“And what would be the purpose of riding it? Are we expecting aerial combat?”

“It’s for this,” the Prime Minister interrupted, presenting an illustrated book.

“What is this?”

“It’s one of the fairy princess’s lady-in-waiting’s books that she read during her voyage. You might recognize the tale: a hero riding a bird to combat a dragon.”

“So, are you suggesting that I should engage in such an endeavor? That’s hardly feasible for an ordinary individual like me...”

At that moment, all eyes turned toward me. Could it be... were they serious? The weight of responsibility when one speaks as a king is immense. My wife has always been adept at maneuvering such delicate conversations. However, I lacked her finesse. Consequently, my strategy was to remain silent. While it might seem evasive, it was a method I had employed in previous meetings. Yet, it seemed I couldn’t entirely fade into the background this time.

“It’s growing dark and dangerous today. Let’s attempt this tomorrow. I have high expectations of you,” my wife said, casting a radiant smile my way, thoroughly enjoying the unfolding events.

Thus, the next day, I found myself aboard the flying bird model, soaring through the skies.

# Chapter 147 - Practice

Um, why am I...?

Across the table from me sits Her Royal Highness the Princess. Before us, tea and sweets are elegantly arranged. As a mere maid, I find myself wondering why I am partaking in a tea session with the princess herself, but apparently, I am her practice partner. The princess gazes at me with a displeased expression.

Usually, I serve under Lady Siluela or Nyshe, who attends directly to the princess. Being in their service alone is an honor, so having the opportunity to engage in a tea ceremony with royalty is beyond my comprehension.

Returning from a condolence mission to the North with the Fairy Lord, I was summoned to the training grounds the next afternoon. It seems that prolonged exposure to the Fairy Lord might unlock one's magical potential, so they wanted to verify if I had acquired any magical abilities.

To my surprise, I could wield water magic, producing enough water to fill both hands. Perhaps it was the profound impact of witnessing the vast, expansive sea that triggered it. When I close my eyes and envision that seascape, something within me, likely my magical essence, transforms into water.

While I couldn't perform any potent spells, I was elated nonetheless. This newfound ability means I can assist in managing my family's estate if I ever return home, and it could prove beneficial in my new household as well.

However, it appears that the usability of the water I conjure for drinking or agriculture varies among individuals. I will need to conduct further experiments to ascertain its practical applications.

At that moment, the princess, usually in a foul mood, surprisingly seemed pleased. Yes, she was genuinely content then.

She had received an earring directly from the Fairy Lord, believing it would grant her powerful magic abilities, much like Lady Siluela. Yet, she couldn't wield any magic.

It's perplexing. Lady Siluela, who was initially indifferent to magic, could perform spells equivalent to the head of the Mage Corps, while the princess, who earnestly yearned for magical prowess, found herself unable to utilize any. What could the Fairy Lord's intentions be with these specially crafted earrings? I'm clueless.

"What topics do young ladies like us usually discuss during tea?"

"...Ah...Um..."

The princess inquired about tea topics. Though she usually exudes an intimidating aura, today, it feels even more pronounced. While it's an honor to be chosen as her practice partner, I have minimal experience with tea ceremonies, Your Highness.

Ah, a topic! I have one—the commendable endeavor of the Fairy Lord's condolence mission to the North!

"I'm not familiar with the topics young ladies like yourself usually discuss. However, if I may be so bold, would you be interested in hearing about the Fairy Lord's condolence mission to the North?"

"Please, go ahead."

Excellent! With a somewhat relieved nod from the princess, I recount the Fairy Lord's activities around rivers, seas, fortresses, and port towns. The princess listens intently, especially when I mention the Fairy Lord creating the earring.

While I relayed almost everything about the Fairy Lord, there were aspects I withheld—specifically, his words. Lady Siluela seemed to think the Fairy Lord wasn't aware of his own words, but since he was elusive when questioned, I decided it best to keep silent. It would be imprudent to speculate recklessly, especially concerning royalty.



Later, I managed to learn various things about the princess—the upcoming tea session with noble maidens during the Harvest Festival and her plans to temporarily relocate to the western frontier before the Garm period.

What does she mean by ‘relocation’? Is something significant about to happen? Sensing it wasn’t the right moment to probe further, I merely nodded in acknowledgment.

“Indeed, there’s no need to search for specific topics for our tea sessions. Simply discussing recent events suffices. I’ve learned something valuable from this practice. Please continue in this manner for the actual event.”

“...Yes.”

—Wait, did she just say ‘actual event’?

# Chapter 148 - Teleportation Array

Just one more to go. Ideally, I wanted to set it up within the royal capital...

After securing the magical sword from beneath the royal capital, the plan was to return and continue espionage and covert operations. However, as I tried to enter the capital, I was halted at the city gate, on the verge of capture.

In a fleeting moment, I caught a glimpse of a sketch resembling me on the paper the gatekeeper was examining.

Somehow, they've identified my face. They might also be aware of my ability to turn invisible. I tried to vanish on the spot, but was doused with muddy water.

If the magical device recognizes the muddy water as part of me, it would turn the entire mud invisible. However, there's a brief lag before complete invisibility kicks in. In that gap, I could have been apprehended. So, I hastily resorted to using teleportation. With this, I have only one teleportation left, which I intend to save for the decisive battle.

There are countless ways to infiltrate the capital, but the extent of their awareness is uncertain. I can't even fathom how they identified me in the first place. Returning to the capital now would entail too much risk. I want to believe they're unaware of my teleportation ability, but can I truly be sure?

I've reached the final point. Once I install this here, the grand teleportation array will be complete. Now, I can teleport an entire army here if needed.

I could unleash a stampede by teleporting monsters. The vast amount of magical power required poses no issue, as I can extract it from experimental subjects at will. With my expertise, I might even be able to summon a legendary creature like a dragon.

Hehe... Let them taste the terror of suddenly confronting enemy forces during the decisive battle. Or perhaps another stampede would be more fitting?

Now, the minimal preparations are complete. I shouldn't linger any longer. It might be prudent to remain concealed until the decisive battle.

# Chapter 149 - Do Not Nod

Ah, ah, ah—there he is! The uncle leader!

A meeting where I absolutely must not nod begins!

As I attempted to leave, the birdcage maid danced an enigmatic dance. Today, it seems, something is afoot.

Uncle Leader arrives with Dress Merchant, Triple Seamstresses, the Cookie Sisters, and, as usual, the ever-bored Door-sama and the Silver-Haired Girl, accompanied by their maids. Uncle Sub is notably absent.

Now, what's on the agenda for today? Uncle Leader takes out two hefty bags. Gold coins! My, my, the royalties from fairy merchandise have doubled since last time! Quite the profit!

I notice Triple Seamstresses diligently collecting dresses from a closet. They rearrange the ten-tiered closet, making space.

Could it be?

Ah, there it is! An autumn dress for me!? Dress Merchant displays dresses of slightly thicker fabric. Already overwhelmed with dresses from previous visits, a complete seasonal wardrobe change? Profits must be soaring.

Today also marks the revenge of the boots. Last time, they hurt so much I threw them off. But now, it seems they've been improved. The men leave, and the fashion show begins. Door-sama is all smiles, but the Silver-Haired Girl looks utterly displeased.

Though she seemed delighted when gifted earrings, something must have happened in the last three days. Perhaps an embarrassing incident involving the Flying King Father? Even a daughter would find it cringe-worthy if her father gathered subordinates to fly on bird

models.

The dresses feel slightly stiff but manageable. The boot variations and improvements are noticeable. This time, socks accompany them.

As I nod in approval, the Triple Seamstresses rejoice. Blast! I've nodded.

Finished dresses are promptly stored in the closet. The birdcage maid seems to keep track of their placement—quite competent indeed.

After the fashion show, cookies with fairy imprints and fragrant herbal tea are served. A unique taste, far from modern Japanese teas, yet quite delightful.

Suddenly, the men return with six coffin-like boxes. Could it be? As the lids open—there they are! Six dolls of me!?

Including the one already present, now there are seven in the room.

Doors-sama inspects each doll with glee. Perhaps he has a penchant for dolls—or anything small and cute, for that matter.

He positions each doll around me. Quite the unnerving experience.

Now, Uncle Leader approaches, preparing to speak. This is the moment of truth. My understanding of their language has improved slightly.

From his words, I gather numbers: one and six. Perhaps it's the 16th Harvest Festival? Food? Cooking? I'm lost.

Everyone awaits my reaction. The frequent mention of “fairy” concerns me. Uncle Leader profits significantly from fairy merchandise, yet I've seen no direct benefits. Could this discussion be about compensation or reward?

If so, refusing now might decline that reward. Thus, considering the context and possibilities, I nod.

# Chapter 150 - Revelation

The Master of the Commercial Guild announces the payment to the Fairy Lady. Yet, as the Fairy Lady has never spent any money, it seems the coins will merely be stored away.

However, not using the coins could lead to economic stagnation. Though the amount isn't significant enough to impact the economy yet, it's substantial for just this summer. Urgency is required in determining its use, but a decision seems distant.

The Fairy Lady seemed to have some understanding of currency upon arriving at the royal castle, but her actions appear impulsive when using it.

While I sensed a high intelligence from the Fairy Lady, I had believed, unlike others, that language didn't bridge our communication. Thus, I considered teaching her our language. Now, I'm beginning to question that decision.

While language may not be her forte, her foresight in addressing the empire's challenges has been extraordinary. Perhaps her successes were less about intelligence and more about sheer luck?

If I were to teach her our language, it might overshadow her luck. Perhaps it's best to leave things as they are.

Furthermore, if the Fairy Lady isn't exceptionally intelligent, it must never be revealed to the kingdom's citizens. She's seen as a symbol of wisdom, often referred to as the Cunning Fairy.

Amid these thoughts, I check on the Fairy Lady's autumn dress being stored in the closet. I notice her wearing the boots we had prepared earlier.

Our first attempt at boots didn't meet her standards. Thus, various

improvements were made.

Firstly, we crafted seamless socks using stretchable yarn to prevent blisters. Then, we conducted trials on the boots' fit and mobility. Leather crafting was challenging due to its stiffness, requiring us to use a special technique.

Seeing the Fairy Lady nod in approval while wearing the boots brought joy to everyone involved in their creation.

After her fitting, tea and treats are served. The tea, made from dried petals presented during a parade in her honor, is exquisite and offers calming effects.

Next, rows of Fairy Lady dolls are inspected by the Queen. Many nobles wish to purchase these dolls, but they are to be sold to western nobles during the Princess's visit.

“In conclusion, multiple confectionery shops have lodged complaints about our exclusive use of the Fairy Lady's emblem,” says the Commercial Guild Master. With the city thriving, the next demand is luxury goods. The Fairy Lady's cookies have been selling rapidly, causing some unrest among other shops.

At the Harvest Festival, various shops will present their best sweets to the Fairy Lady for tasting. She nods in agreement after a brief pause, setting the stage for an exciting confectionery showdown.

Thus, ensuring the Fairy Lady keeps her promise is paramount. Her participation promises to draw crowds, and she must be present at the confectionery showdown.



# Chapter 151 - Eneria

Having traveled all the way to the capital of Eneria, I find it perplexing that despite being a grand nation of magic, there isn't a single adventurer skilled in the arcane arts here. The number of magic practitioners doesn't seem much different from those in Farsian. While I cannot use magic nor perceive magical energy, the quality seems comparable. I see no signs that magic has made life or culture notably more convenient here. Is this truly the land of magic mastery?

"Ah, so you're from Farsian after all. Being a former guild master is quite impressive," a man who had sat down next to me remarks casually.

"Is that so?" I respond.

His casual inquiry leads me to believe he might be a wandering adventurer. Such individuals frequent taverns like this, seeking information. However, this man doesn't look like someone who ventures far from home. He wears the attire of a swordsman, yet his movements lack finesse, and he appears rather slender for someone of that profession.

Yet, this slight sense of incongruity isn't out of the ordinary. Many adventurers focused on reconnaissance or escort missions gather information beyond their usual scope. Some even profit from selling such information. So, what's bothering me?

"I'm new to Eneria. They call this place the land of magic mastery, right? How does it excel in magic compared to other nations?" I query, observing him from the corner of my eye. While it may be a bit forward, he was the one to initiate the conversation, so I feel no need for restraint.

"Heh, curious, are you? Fine, I'll indulge you. But it's a long story. Drink up; it's on me," he replies generously.

Such generosity from a stranger? His equipment seems average, so

what's the catch?

...He's just tampered with my drink. Could this be an attempt at robbery or, worse, human trafficking? I should leave immediately.

"Sorry, I have plans for tomorrow. If this is going to be a long conversation, let's save it for next time. Excuse me, I'm leaving," I announce, getting up.

"Is that so? What a shame," he mutters.

The next day, while carrying out a simple task outside, I realize I'm being followed—five of them. Just as I stop to assess the situation, flames burst forth! Magic!

Instinctively, I roll on the ground to evade the attack. As I rise, another flame approaches from a different direction.

Damn it, at least two of them are skilled magicians, and rare ones at that. Their precision in targeting suggests they're high-level spellcasters—no wonder they're known as masters of magic.

Dodging their spells again, I gather some sand as I rise. If they're all spellcasters, fighting head-on would be futile.

As I run towards the city, three fireballs converge on me, each slightly offset for better coverage. Their synchronization indicates rigorous training. I manage to deflect one with a thrown sword, but the other two hit their mark.

Suddenly, a mage with a masked face stands in my path. Quickly, I throw sand to disrupt his incantation and kick him away, realizing he lacks real combat experience.

Eneria has seen peace for decades, and with no magic-wielding adventurers, these attackers must be inexperienced. I might just escape.

But just as hope blooms, overwhelming drowsiness sweeps over me, and I collapse to the ground.

“Heh, it’s finally kicking in. You didn’t notice due to the smell of burning flames, did you? I’ve sprinkled sleep-inducing powder,” the man from the tavern sneers, confirming my suspicions about him being a mage. The world fades as consciousness slips away.

“Such a hassle. We’ll move him. When he wakes up, he’ll be brainwashed,” he declares.

Damn it... I’ve failed.

## **Chapter 152 - The Lady from the West**

In a secluded corner of the garden behind the royal palace, a table had been set, and there I waited. Presently, the young lady of the frontier countess, one of the attendees for today’s tea gathering, graced the scene with her presence. Rising to offer my respects, I did so with the utmost elegance. One mustn’t address superiors with anything less.

Born to a modest baronial house, here I am, serving at the royal palace, appointed as an assistant close to the fairy lord, and now the practice companion for the princess’s tea gatherings. Though I’ve received guidance from Siluela-san these past few days, the nerves gnaw at my stomach. Indeed, they do.

It appears there will be several more tea gatherings before the Harvest Festival, and I’ve been designated for each one.

Never before had the princess hosted such frequent tea gatherings. And yet, to each of them comes a nameless baronial damsel—me. One can only wonder what whispers this has incited in the social circles.

However, this could be my opportunity. By gaining favor with the princess, I might secure a beneficial relationship. A union with a noble family could alleviate the burdens of my own household’s financial strains.

“Greetings. I am Elett La Wesfaer.”

“Nice to meet you. I am Auri La Reestam. I look forward to today’s proceedings.”

Lady Elett, the frontier countess from the west, was one of the attendees for today’s tea gathering. Her flaxen hair, gently waving, framed a face as soft as one would expect of a noble. In a society where audacity often reigns, her demeanor was refreshingly different.

Being from the post-baby boom following the birth of the second prince, she is about five years my senior. While it’s customary for tea gatherings hosted by a young princess to invite peers, the age difference in this instance suggests certain intentions.

The princess is set to seek refuge with the western count amidst the impending Garm period, and Elett’s inclusion likely serves diplomatic ends. Moreover, with Elett’s recent recovery of sight attributed to the fairy lord’s intervention, her presence aligns with the princess’s broader goals regarding the fairy realm.

Unlike those stationed at the palace, Elett has brought her own maid. Typically, for an event of this nature, maids from the princess’s retinue would suffice. Yet, considering Elett’s recent recovery, her preference for familiar assistance is understandable.

“Likewise, I extend my warm regards. Please, take a seat,” I responded, as a palace maid promptly served tea beside Lady Elett.

Moments later, the princess and the fairy lord made their entrance. Neishe, the princess’s attendant, and Siluela, accompanying the fairy lord, stood behind them.

Though not a necessity, Siluela’s presence becomes crucial when serving tea in the fairy-sized cups, a task only she seems capable of mastering.

As I rose, so did Lady Elett, displaying a grace that belied her ongoing

rehabilitation.

“Good day. I am most pleased you could join us,” the princess greeted.

“Thank you for the invitation, Your Highness.”

“Indeed, I am grateful,” Lady Elett added.

The fairy lord then struck an unfamiliar pose, and suddenly, fluffy white creatures—were those sheep?—started appearing from nowhere, quickly enveloping a startled Lady Elett and her maid. Yet, as quickly as they appeared, they vanished.

“No need for concern. The fairy lord’s actions always hold meaning,” the princess reassured, her voice unwavering.

“Intriguing. Might you elucidate the significance of those sheep?”

“I cannot say for certain, but undoubtedly, their appearance holds some future relevance for you.”

Ah, the fairy lord, not only restoring Lady Elett’s vision but also providing cryptic glimpses into her future.

# Chapter 153 - Harvest Festival

Lately, I've observed the apprentice maids donning dresses, undergoing rigorous etiquette training. Curiously, I find myself roped into this as well. I wonder, must I continually change dresses for such lessons? While I indulge them during snack sessions, any lesson devoid of treats tempts me to flee.

Today, however, seemed different, for our destination was outdoors. Usually, I sit indoors with the apprentice maids, but this time, they arrived ahead of me. Accompanied by the silver-haired individual, we entered, only to find another unfamiliar face—a young lady, older than the silver-haired one, perhaps akin to a hero in age.

The unfamiliar maiden approached, speaking of the Fairy Lord's eyes? What could she mean? Are my eyes special?

Could it be they desire to pluck them out for some sinister purpose? Or perhaps they appreciate them? Eyes in this realm come in myriad hues, akin to precious gems. Reflecting on it, I find myself pondering my own eyes' allure.

A response is warranted. Shall I strike a pose of reverence? "Behold," I declare silently, "the impeccable stance of divine serenity." Suddenly, sheep appear—countless, scattering about! They vanish as swiftly as they came.

Both the eye-admirer and the maids behind her seemed startled. Thankfully, the silver-haired one managed the situation with composure. Nonchalance is key; pretend the sheep never existed, right?

The event concluded uneventfully, with tea and treats marking a graceful finish. As a paragon of elegance, hosting such gatherings should be second nature. Yet, to my chagrin, I found myself repeatedly obligated to attend. Beyond the eye aficionado, few encounters lingered in memory.

Just when I anticipated another tea session, I was whisked away in a carriage. Ahead and behind, knights adorned the procession, accompanied by what seemed like a musical ensemble. Inside my carriage, the silver-haired and golden-haired individuals were present, while another carried the esteemed King Flash and Lord Close-up. A parade, unmistakably. And how long it's been since I've seen the golden-haired one!

The procession traversed the noble district, revealing a bustling festival upon entering the town. Given the recent preparations, today must be the Harvest Festival. This town surely thrives on festivities, having celebrated before my seaside excursion.

As the parade circled the central plaza and halted before a church, a grand spectacle unfolded. A crimson carpet rolled out, musicians lined the sides, and the king and lord entered the sanctuary. Following suit, I sensed my place alongside the silver-haired companion.

As we arrived at the altar, I noticed an array of fruits and vegetables, with a new addition to the trio of priests—previously all male, now featuring a mature female. Perhaps a consequence of past disturbances? Intriguing.

As the ceremony commenced, my attention waned. Curious, I ventured closer to inspect the offerings. A medley of familiar and exotic produce lay before me, piquing my culinary curiosity.

Suddenly, a distinct aroma captivated the crowd's attention. Before I knew it, all eyes were on me. The linguistic nuances between castle and town dialects perplexed me, but it was clear: I had inadvertently become the center of attention.

With the king and silver-haired companion's gaze fixed upon me, it seemed prudent to rejoin my original position.

Alas, the Harvest Festival proved rather mundane.

# Chapter 154 - Sweets Contest

Upon concluding the affairs at the church, I found myself once again ensconced within the carriage, the parade continuing its vibrant procession.

As I observed the town, it was evident that the denizens were stocking up on provisions. With winter on the horizon, perhaps they were amassing supplies for the impending hibernation.

Amidst the festive atmosphere, the lurking presence of petty criminals like pickpockets couldn't be ignored. Sensing a few nefarious auras around, I pondered whether to unveil their locations. Ah, the telltale signs of thieves at work.

Suddenly, the blond gentleman stood up, waving cheerfully at the surrounding crowd. Silver-haired lady followed suit, obscuring my map in the process. Alas, the red indicators—likely signifying thieves—went unnoticed.

The parade eventually circled back to the central plaza where King Flash and Door-up began their addresses. Meanwhile, the blond gentleman dispatched orders to the soldiers, undoubtedly ensuring the security befitting an event graced by the nation's leaders.

As I absently listened to the speeches, I became aware of food being distributed. Tables laden with victuals surrounded the periphery of the square, seemingly offered gratis. A generous gesture, no doubt, given the abundant harvest.

Once the events concluded, King Flash and Door-up returned to their carriage. As the blond and silver-haired individuals prepared to embark, I intended to follow suit. Yet, the avian-caged maid, who appeared beside me, indicated otherwise.

Was I to remain behind? The parade departed for the castle without me.



Subsequently, the stage was set near the iconic statue of the liquor-man, and to my astonishment, as I ascended, a roar of applause erupted. Was this—could it truly be—a spotlight moment for me? How serendipitous, the times have finally caught up!

A table, tailor-made for my stature, was set upon the stage, upon which six plates of confections were meticulously arranged, each accompanied by a labeled plaque bearing numbers one through six.

Ah, a culinary event, it seemed! Whether a tasting event, a battle of flavors, or perhaps a speed-eating challenge, the possibilities tantalized the mind. Yet, could it be that I, a fairy of diminutive size, was merely a judge? Such a prospect would be daunting!

Without further ado, I embarked upon the tasting journey. First, the familiar fairy emblem-adorned cookie. Then, a peculiar concoction of unsweetened sponge and unidentifiable coating. Next, a complex amalgamation of sweetness and bitterness. Onward, a delectable treat imbued with honey or perhaps maple. Followed by a perplexing pastry harboring an unexpected fishy element. Lastly, a dessert that defied categorization—was it a cake? Was it a pudding?

Having sampled all, I discerned my favorite and signaled my choice. The crowd erupted in excitement, speculating on my selections. Ah, the suspense!

The emcee, a familiar elderly gentleman, eagerly awaited my verdict. With a flourish, I announced my top choices, culminating in a surprising, if not controversial, first place.

And so, the confectioners ascended the stage, their creations held high, as the festivities continued. Though my palate had spoken, the whims of the crowd proved unpredictable. Yet, in the end, it mattered little. After all, taste, much like life itself, is ever subjective.

Thus concluded the Sweets Contest, a symphony of flavors and emotions, leaving memories as enduring as they were delightful.

## **Chapter 155 - The Commencement of Action**

The Harvest Festival concluded without a hitch. To the best of memory, this year's festival was undoubtedly the most prosperous ever witnessed. Ever since my earliest recollections, the kingdom had been embroiled in war, and even post-ceasefire, instead of recovery, it seemed to visibly decline. Yet, everything changed upon encountering the fairy lord in the western woods.

The day following the Harvest Festival, a grand council assembled. Though it wasn't a forum for debate among attendees, its primary objective was to disseminate current intelligence and announce decisions concerning imperial affairs. I surveyed the room, noting the unprecedented gathering of nobility.

"The return of prisoners has been successfully completed."

"Hmm."

"Subsequently, the advancement of imperial troops has been confirmed. They are expected to reach our borders two days before the onset of Garm."

The Prime Minister delivered the current situation. Initially, it was suspected that the empire would clandestinely cross our borders. However, it appears the main imperial force is advancing openly. This would mark the first large-scale confrontation since the ceasefire, likely coinciding with the Garm period.

"The Northern Alliance will send reinforcements eastward, under the command of the Second Prince."

"Understood."

The swift agreement from the Northern Alliance to dispatch reinforcements was surprising. Previously, they were a faction in opposition to the royal family. The dissolution of the House of Bastille must have had significant repercussions, but that alone couldn't explain their cooperation.

—Fairy Tea. Since the circulation of fairy tea in noble circles, there has been a noticeable increase in unity and coordination.

Speaking of the Northern Alliance, seafood has recently become available in the capital. While the entire kingdom suffered from food shortages, coastal towns along the north had maintained stability through fishing. However, intentional blockades by the former Duke of Bastille had disrupted overland supplies.

At yesterday's Harvest Festival, a fish-filled pie was selected by the fairy lord during the confectionery event. The taste was questionable at best, with a slightly fishy interior conflicting with the pie's sweetness. Nevertheless, the selection might signify an appeal for collaboration with the Northern Alliance.

“Furthermore, three fairy swords—Water, Wind, and Light—will be deployed to the front lines.”

Some nobles seemed perplexed, unfamiliar with the existence of fairy swords, previously highly classified. There had been debates within the royal court about utilizing fairy powers in the war. Concerns arose that excessive use might provoke neighboring nations. Yet, with the nation's survival at stake, the deployment of fairy swords was authorized.

Princess Tires will evacuate to the Wesfair Marchioness's domain for safety.

“Your Grace of Wesfair, I entrust her to you.”

“Of course, she is most welcome.”

As I heard my name mentioned, a sense of determination enveloped me. I desired to contribute to the kingdom's defense, but my capabilities lay elsewhere. For now, evacuating to the west and contributing through governance or diplomacy post-war seemed the most prudent course.

Tomorrow, I would depart with the Wesfair Marchioness and her daughter, Ellette, under minimal guard. However, I'd arranged for my companions, Nyshe and Siluela, to accompany us. Both skilled in magical warfare, their presence would be invaluable.

"In the end," the Crown Prince declared, "this upcoming battle will conclude our longstanding conflict with the empire."

The room echoed with fervent agreement. My heart surged with anticipation, realizing that the gears of war had begun to turn.

## **Chapter 156.1 - Imperial Assumptions**

"For now, it appears the enemy remains inactive."

"Hmm, we too shall hold our ground initially. Make it clear to everyone not to act prematurely even as Garm approaches."

"Understood."

Initially, the plan was to bypass the border tunnel, eluding the kingdom's forces to strike directly at the capital. However, the emergence of high-tier creatures in the Troll Forest, the tunnel's exit, rendered that strategy untenable. Consequently, the situation has devolved into a tense standoff across the kingdom's borders.

Nevertheless, that detestable minister had anticipated gaining a significant advantage. By poisoning the underground of the capital, rumors suggested an epidemic would spread by summer. Yet, there's been no sign of any such illness within the kingdom.

Furthermore, the strategy to deplete the kingdom's potion reserves through mass purchasing has been rendered futile by the appearance of what they call a miraculous potion—a single vial capable of complete recovery from near-death.

Underestimating such unexpected strengths could prove perilous; there's nothing more daunting than an enemy devoid of fear.

Moreover, the previously laid traps, like the one at Stampede, reportedly thwarted by merely three individuals, have been widely circulated within the empire as cautionary tales. While these accounts likely exaggerate, the fact remains that Stampede was defended under dire circumstances. Could there be swordsmen or wizards blessed by fairy protection emerging as well?

“Also, it seems the Second Prince and influential nobles have returned to the border.”

“Very well. As instructed, do not harm the Second Prince.”

That reckless prince, always wandering to the front lines despite his royal status. He seems oblivious to the empire’s patronage, continually jeopardizing himself. While many capable individuals from the kingdom have been intentionally eliminated, fools like him have been spared. A kingdom full of fools is hardly worth conquering.

Indeed, even though a direct confrontation is imminent, defeat seems unlikely. Reports indicate that when that foolish minister rashly attacked an enemy castle, he was repelled by a formidable magical sword, which we have since acquired.

The fairy, unexpected and disruptive, reportedly lost an arm during the assault on the enemy castle and is currently unaccounted for. King Farsian himself is injured and unlikely to survive long.

Moreover, while rain has begun to fall in the kingdom, it won’t immediately solve their food shortage or diminish their diminished military strength.

“What of that infamous magic sword? Is it operational?”

“No, we haven’t yet managed to unleash its magic capabilities.”

“Very well. Maintain our position here for the day. If fortunate, another Stampede might occur in the kingdom, allowing us an

opportunity to exploit the ensuing chaos.”

“Understood. However, what if Stampede doesn’t occur?”

“In that case, proceed as planned. Move by the morning of the second day of Garm.”

“Understood.”

Defeating a kingdom riddled with incompetence should be a given; the real challenge lies ahead. There are reports that the other side will also make their move as Garm begins. We must swiftly seize the capital upon crossing the border, ensuring they don’t gain any advantage. Then, we must strategize on how to oust that minister.

—There’s no room for error here.

## **Chapter 156.2 - Chapter Four Character Introductions**

□ Hero-kun

Name: Crest La Farsian

The second prince of the Farsian Kingdom. He was part of the Eastern Border Patrol but has returned to the royal castle.

□ Swordsman Resembling a Sorcerer (No nickname from the fairy)

Name: Gilbert

A spy who arrived in addition to those caught by the kingdom. As of Chapter Three, he had contact with the adventurer named Nayo. Mistakenly took a soft sword prepared by the fairy as a magical sword. Due to lack of spy training, he often acts recklessly.

☐ Lord Master (No nickname from the fairy as of Chapter Four)

Name: ——

The Border Earl of the West. His daughter was blind but was healed by the fairy.

☐ Eye Fetish Lady

Name: Elett La Wesfaer

The daughter of the Border Earl of the West. She was blind but was healed by the fairy.

☐ Chekera-san

Name: ——

The lord of a port town. Unusually dark and dandy for a kingdom noble, giving off a vibe that he might be called

“Chekera.”

☐ Imperial Soldier Captain 1 (No nickname from the fairy)

Name: ——

Led his unreliable subordinates commendably in the kingdom's underground waterways transformed by the fairy into a dungeon.

☐ Imperial Soldier Captain 2 (No nickname from the fairy)

Name: ——

Guarding the tunnel allowing the empire's troops to bypass the kingdom's borders and invade the kingdom for attack purposes.



# Chapter 157 - A Dark Morning

Ah, it's so dark!

When I woke up this morning, it was dark—almost as if it were night. But perhaps slightly brighter than that.

The apprentice maid is here to prepare for the morning, so it doesn't seem like it's still before dawn. However, looking out the window reveals a dark scenery; only the occasional light allows a glimpse of the boundary between the town and the outside. What's going on?

I look up from the window, searching for the sun. Ah, I see—the sun is obscured by a white rainbow. A portion of the white rainbow near where the sun should be appears slightly brighter.

Recently, there have been many magical lights and lamps installed, so I had thought it might get darker in winter. But it seems the darkness is due to the sun being hidden behind the white rainbow. I wonder how long it will remain hidden?

Just for today? Or perhaps several days?

The apprentice maid also comes to the window and gazes upward. However, the silver-haired girl, who left with Elette La Wesfaer a few days ago, is not here. They left together for some tea party.

I had assumed I'd accompany them, but I realized at the last moment that my belongings weren't prepared. Both the silver-haired girl, being of royal descent, and the maid of the castle have their own circumstances. Still, it feels a bit lonely. I wonder when they'll return. What if they don't come back this winter? It couldn't be that they'll be away for years, right?

Realizing at the last moment that I couldn't go, I couldn't prepare much. However, I found some preserved fruits in the kitchen and secretly tucked them into the silver-haired girl's belongings. I hope she

thinks of me while enjoying them with Elette and the others.

The apprentice maid's hands tremble noticeably when brewing my tea. I think it's quite a challenge to pour from a human-sized teapot into a fairy-sized cup, but the silver-haired maid manages it effortlessly.

After breakfast, I venture into the town. There are hardly any people around, just occasional individuals carrying lamps.

From the castle, it seemed like there were few buildings with lights, but peeking through windows reveals small lights in every house, suggesting everyone is busy indoors.

As always, the townspeople spot me easily. They greet me with smiles, and some children even rush over to say hello.

The church is eerily quiet and dark, while the alchemist's building bustles with activity, as if they are intensely producing some potion beneath bright lights. At the adventurer's guild, adventurers drown their sorrows in a dimly lit dining area.

Ah, it's strangely comforting to see these down-and-out adventurers in this unusually dark town, making it feel somewhat normal.

The adventurers notice me and offer food. Soon, others gather around, and a lively commotion ensues.

Yes, even in this dark town, there's a fantastical charm that's oddly enjoyable!

# Chapter 158 - Fruitless Pursuit

“Initiate the operation. Light up the area.”

At the outer edge of Troll Forest, everyone ignites their lights, maintaining just enough distance where troll packs are barely visible. Trolls rely heavily on their vision, so if they see the lights during the dark Garm period, they’ll surely give chase.

“Go! Run! Run! Shout as loud as you can! Don’t let them catch you!”

“Uoooh!”

“Ooooooh!”

“Aaaaaah!”

Forty individuals burst out of the forest, lights in hand, running across the dim plains of the Garm period, shouting at the top of their lungs.

“...Captain, something’s wrong! The trolls aren’t following us!”

“What did you say!?”

Upon receiving the report from a subordinate, the captain checks behind while running. Knowing that being caught would likely mean death, turning to look back is terrifying. Yet, as he scans, it becomes clear: the trolls aren’t pursuing them.

The packs that were visible moments ago are now nowhere in sight.

“Everyone, halt immediately! Stop!”

“Sir!”

He manages to call back even those who had sprinted ahead.

“Heavy... breathing... What’s the matter?”

“Extinguish all lights. The trolls aren’t following. The bait failed. We’ll approach the packs again, this time adding some offense to ensure success.”

“That’s... understood.”

They backtrack and soon spot the troll packs. As they inch closer, the ground shakes from the trolls’ growls, alerting everyone to an anomaly.

“In combat? Seems like something’s fighting the trolls.”

“It’s too dark to see clearly... Is it... human?”

Judging by the troll’s movements, they estimate the size of whatever’s opposing them to be that of an average human.

Within the troll packs, this entity seems diminutive.

“Adventurers? Have they accepted a subjugation request?”

“No, it doesn’t seem like typical adventurers.”

While adventurers would be the likely candidates for troll hunting, the subordinate quickly dismisses the notion. Though unreadable in the dark, his tone betrays his confusion.

“Even if not adventurers, it’s odd. Engaging a pack of trolls, including elite types, should require multiple people. Yet, we don’t hear multiple voices. Only the trolls’ growls. Even a well-coordinated party would communicate.”

“Indeed. Regardless, aim a bright spell in that direction. If it catches attention, good. If not, at least we’ll gain intel.”

He directs the mage for an attack. Once fearful of trolls, the mage’s face is now unreadable in the darkness, which is better for morale.

Whoosh!

After a brief incantation, a bright flame streaks towards the troll pack, illuminating a single human figure amidst the grayscale landscape.

The flame hits a troll, plunging everything back into darkness. Yet, this confirms the troll didn’t come their way.

“No catch.”

“More importantly, did you see? One person fighting a troll pack? An adventurer?”

“I find it hard to believe one person could handle a troll pack alone... perhaps a renowned adventurer. What’s our move?”

“We’ll feign assistance and approach. In this darkness, they won’t recognize us as imperial soldiers. Once they’re off-guard, eliminate the adventurer. Then retreat towards the town, maintaining distance and lighting up. After that, proceed as planned: lure the trolls to the town and initiate a stampede.”

“That’s reckless! They’re facing a troll pack alone! Plus, that plan will lead the trolls right back to us!”

“Don’t think it’s possible! Find a way!”

“Ugh...”

It's clear to him it's a stretch, but it must be done.

“Understood?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Alright, let's go!”

# Chapter 159 - As Anticipated

The mission was to investigate the Imperial border route. Moving from the northeastern edge of the southeastern forest, the path curved from the northeast to the west, gradually shifting to the southwest. The goal was to head south and meet the mountain range to complete the mission.

This southeastern forest, formally known as the Forest of Ern, was also called the Troll Forest for a reason. Trolls, enchanted by the fairy swords, gathered in abundance. Since there was no one else around except for me, I saw no issue in moving alongside them. Hardly anyone ventured into the forest during the Garm period anyway.

Ah, the Garm period... I should have been back in the royal capital, indulging in feasts before the Harvest Festival. Every town, including the capital, received free food from their lords during this festival. In the capital, it came from the royal family. This year, I heard there was a particularly bountiful harvest. With the influence of the fairy beings, more people and goods gathered, making the festival even more lavish than usual.

Lost in these thoughts as I moved south, dispatching trolls along the way, suddenly flames flew in from the north. Given the straight trajectory, it was likely a magical attack. The flame, piercing the Garm darkness, struck and exploded on one of the trolls.

Reinforcements? It would be reasonable to think it dangerous for someone to face a troll pack without light in such darkness. But this was troublesome. If I were alone, I could manage, but with them joining, I might have to defend while fighting. I wished they would just retreat.

To divert the trolls from the magic attack's target, I threw a small stone using my fairy sword.

"Hey, you there! Are you an adventurer!? Let me assist!"

“No need! Stay away!”

“Don’t be shy!”

What’s this? Even after declining, they forcefully joined the fray... How many are there? Dozens, it seems. Even in this darkness, enhanced vision allowed me to see them clearly. Uniformed equipment, possibly a regular army, especially with mages among them.

Imperial soldiers? Or perhaps the private army of a neighboring noble? Imperial soldiers wouldn’t likely assist in troll subjugation. First, let’s deal with the trolls gathering around. They are a nuisance, not invincible.

While distracted by sporadic magical attacks, I swiftly took down a troll. Even with their advanced skills, they should realize I don’t need help. But they keep interfering, making it hard to move freely. Were they intentionally doing this?

Just then, arrows flew toward me. Why? Even if they were Imperial soldiers, would they come to kill a lone adventurer fighting trolls, risking an attack?

Finally, the mages targeted me. They aimed both magic and arrows. Their coordination was impressive. However, a single troll could easily swipe away multiple enemies.

“Argh!”

“Hey! Are you alright?”

“Focus! Don’t become a liability!”

“Captain! Captain! No good! That one! It’s the source of the magic! It’s an elite troll!”



“What!?”

An elite troll? Where? I see three trolls around, all seeming regular. I’ve only encountered high-level monsters like an Orc General or Orc King before. Could it be one of those? Do they not recognize elite trolls by appearance?

“Ah! You troll!”

The enraged mage aimed flames at me. Did he mistake me for a troll? Even in the Garm darkness, it’s not pitch-black.

Could he confuse a human with a troll?

“Wait! I’m a human! An adventurer! If you’re mistaken, calm down!”

“Quiet! A human is unmistakable! You ruined our plan!”

“What are you talking about?”

“You! If you were a troll, it would have been better!”

This conversation was unexpected, leaving me unsure how to respond.

“...What do you mean?”

Though taken aback, it seemed their leader was equally confused. I couldn’t help but wonder about the miscalculations and misunderstandings. If not for the fairy sword’s magic, none of this would have happened.

Nonetheless, these soldiers seemed to have a plan that involved this forest. They mentioned a tunnel before. Could it be the cave I stumbled upon? If so, that’s quite a distance from the Imperial border. What would they do now?

Reflecting on it, I felt manipulated by the royal family. While adventurers generally don't interfere in a country's wars, they must defend themselves if attacked. In the end, I ended up restraining dozens of Imperial soldiers.

Given a powerful sword by the royal family and taking on their request, I found myself battling Imperial soldiers. It seemed they planned to block off tunnels or valleys with rock barriers.

The royal family must have had foresight, aided by the fairy's blessings. Was this all part of their scheme? How far does their understanding reach?

—Was everything going according to the fairy's plan?

## **Chapter 160 - There's No Way To Avoid It**

“Enemy attack! Enemy attack!”

“...So they have come.”

In the obsidian darkness of the Garm period, assailants closed in. While visibility was limited, it appeared there was a group attempting to encircle us from behind.

I had been en route to the border earl's capital, and according to plan, I should have arrived at the capital by the eve of the Garm period. However, due to repeated sabotage along the way, I found myself still ensnared within the forest on the first day of Garm.

The forest sprawling to the west of the kingdom was vast. It was within this very forest that I had encountered the Fairy Lord. Since entering, we had faced obstructing fallen trees multiple times. Once or twice could be dismissed as mere coincidence, but after the third and fourth instances, it was clear we were being deliberately hindered.

I had assumed that with Nyshe and Siluela, both adept in magic, any

fallen trees would be swiftly cleared. However, magic proved less convenient than anticipated. Siluela, while powerful, inadvertently ravaged the roadway with her spells, rendering it impassable. Although we managed to repair the damages, it consumed precious time.

Nyshe lacked the firepower to clear obstructions, and her limited fire-based magic risked igniting the forest. Thus, whenever trees blocked our path, the border earl's troops resorted to manual labor, relocating them with ropes and horses.

The atmosphere was markedly different from the last time we encountered bandits. These attackers advanced silently, draped in ominous black, far more intimidating than any bandit. Could they be imperial soldiers?

As the assailants closed in, swords clashed with our defenders. Suddenly, the surroundings illuminated with magical attacks. Not just one or two but a barrage from what appeared to be numerous mages among the forty assailants. It was a perilous scenario; the border earl's cavalry attempted to disrupt the mages' incantations but found their path blocked by enemy vanguards.

Witnessing this, Siluela, with a commanding presence, stepped forth from the carriage. She unleashed a formidable spell that neutralized the incoming magical assault, uprooting trees and scattering enemy mages.

"Remain inside the carriage and take cover," she instructed, then joined by Nyshe, who displayed a newfound courage.

Both emerged as pillars of strength.

Yet, from another flank, another magical assault ensued. A lone royal guard deflected one spell, but the carriage was struck by multiple powerful blasts, causing it to overturn. The intensity surpassed any previous encounters, raising questions about the enemy's capabilities.

The number of mages was inconceivable. Our kingdom had a limited count, including Nyshe, Siluela, the mage commander in the capital,

and a veteran. The enemy's resources seemed disproportionately vast, signaling an unexpected challenge.

The border earl's troops finally surrounded the overturned carriage, but lacking anti-magic shields, they were sitting ducks. The situation was dire, with injuries mounting and uncertainties looming.

"Your Highness, fear not. Our protectors will shield us. Besides, we have mages of our own," I tried to reassure Elett, though my own concerns about the border earl's safety and the fate of Nyshe and Siluela weighed heavily.

Suddenly, a soft thud resonated. Despite the overturned carriage, it felt as if someone had boarded its roof. Before I could ascertain, a radiant spell pierced the darkness.

"Scream!"

"Cursed magic!"

"Princess!"

In this confined space, there was nowhere to evade the oncoming magical assault. My thoughts raced as the inevitable approached.

—Boom!

# Chapter 161 - Barrier

The cacophony and brilliance subsided. ...Are we alive?

“What is this!? Defensive magic? No, a barrier!”

The voice of the enemy mage who had presumably unleashed a spell was tinged with astonishment. It seemed the spell had failed. Inside the carriage, the interior was in disarray from the close-range magical assault, and scattered luggage bore witness to the chaos. Yet, a radiant membrane enveloped Elett and me in a protective hemisphere, shielding us from harm.

“Well, your fairy earrings are glowing!”

“Indeed!”

The Fairy Lord’s earrings! She had foreseen this perilous situation and granted me protection. Perhaps she also provided a means to overcome this predicament. I noticed jars of preserved fruits lying around—items seemingly prepared by the Fairy Lord before the siege on the royal castle but left unattended.

“You fiend! By the name of Gilbert—”

“You shall not!”

Another invisible mage began chanting for a second attack. A guard shouted a warning, uncertain if he’d be in time.

Swiftly, I opened a jar, hurling its contents directly above the presumed location of the mage.

“Ugh! What a stench!”

“What!?”

The fruits had evidently decayed from prolonged neglect. Their rancid juices splattered, filling the vicinity with a putrid odor. The unexpected assault disrupted the mage's incantation, dispelling his invisibility and revealing a man resembling the description of the one who stole the fake magical sword. The Fairy Lord had indeed foreseen this, and hurling the jar was the correct action.

"What is this? I can't turn invisible?"

Thud, thud, thud—

"Ha!"

"Ugh, teleport—"

A guard ascended the carriage, striking down the man whose blood splattered before he vanished once more. Yet, multiple magical assaults threatened the guard now rendered a sitting target atop the carriage.

Perhaps sensing our vulnerability below, the guard seemed hesitant to dodge. I swiftly climbed up, pulling the guard within the protective light barrier. Despite the relentless barrage, the Fairy Lord's protection remained unbroken.

Where had the man gone? Had he teleported? If so, it was a spell for instantaneous long-range movement, as he claimed he couldn't turn invisible anymore. Hence, he wouldn't be lurking invisibly nearby.

Then, there was Siluela—there she was. As expected, her chanting was interrupted by enemy interference.

"He can no longer turn invisible. Protect Elett, the border earl's daughter, here. This carriage should shield against magical attacks."

"Understood. What of you?"

“I shall end this assault.”

Leaving the guard, I leaped from the carriage, racing towards Siluela. My childhood days spent playing with my second eldest brother proved beneficial, granting me agility even now. Though I inadvertently adopted some of his rough language, my gratitude knew no bounds given the circumstances.

“Stop that girl! She’s the princess!”

Swords and spells hindered my advance. Yet, the Fairy Lord’s protection stood firm. Undeterred, I reached Siluela.

“Princess! Why come this way?”

“No attacks penetrate this light. Calmly chant and repel our foes.”

“Understood!”

What followed was a spectacle. Siluela unleashed radiant bands of light, mowing down enemy mages and their woodland cover alike. Their screams echoed in a world brighter than a midsummer noon, as Neeshe skillfully impeded their movements, ensuring the border earl’s forces steadily dispatched them.

Before long, the assault subsided.

# Chapter 162 - Gather the Sheep

“What’s the damage?”

The Border Earl inquired of his subordinate. Thankfully, the Border Earl was unharmed.

“We have four dead, five incapacitated, and others wounded but able to fight. Additionally, about half of our horses are down. The princess’s carriage is also inoperable.”

Considering the number of mages they were attacked by, the casualties seemed surprisingly low. However, most of the deceased and severely injured had shielded my carriage. Had I realized the power of the Fairy Lord’s earrings sooner...

But there was no time for regret. Such a large number of mages attacking the western territories was completely unexpected, indicating a potential crisis.

“Understood. Those who can’t move and have lost their horses will go separately. The rest will return to the capital immediately. The separated group will proceed to the nearest town after delivering the wounded to the capital. Treat the injured; mourn the dead.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Your Highness, I apologize, but may I ride in my carriage?”

“Of course. Thank you for your defense. By the way, could you confirm if this man’s body is among the dead?”

Siluela presented a portrait of the invisible man. The Border Earl’s eyes widened upon seeing it.

“This man was among the attackers?”



“Yes, precisely.”

“Understood. Ensure to identify him during the disposal of the bodies.”

“Yes, sir!”

Thus, they camped on the spot for the night. The terrain, initially unsuitable for camping, had been cleared by Siluela’s magic. First aid was administered to the wounded, and respects were paid to the fallen Border Earl soldiers. Their sacrifices meant that I must continue to contribute to the kingdom.

Later, as the Border Earl’s troops processed the enemy bodies, Elett and I cleansed ourselves discreetly. Elett, having witnessed such intense magical combat for the first time, remained pale and silent. Words failed me to comfort her.

“What do you think the enemy’s objective was?”

The next morning, half the group departed for the Border Earl’s capital. While traveling, I discussed the situation with the Border Earl.

“It was excessive for a mere delay tactic. Without the Fairy Lord’s barrier, we would’ve undoubtedly suffered more. They likely intended to assassinate both of us.”

It appeared the Border Earl’s side had faced significant pressure as well. Thankfully, the carriage’s magical protection and prioritization by his troops had saved them. Though the royal family might resent the prioritization of the Border Earl over a princess, strategically, it made sense.

“Do you think the attackers were from the Empire?”

“No, I suspect otherwise. The Empire has its forces concentrated at the eastern border. Deploying such mages to the west seems unlikely.”

“Then...”

“Eneria.”

“What!? Eneria is supposed to be an ally!”

Elett was shocked, but neither Siluela nor Nyshe showed surprise. Given the intensity of the magical conflict, they naturally thought of a major magical power. Elett’s expression shifted from shock to despair.

“When the Eneria Kingdom is confirmed as the attacker, it implies they’ve been acting against us since at least the Stampede. Eneria doesn’t typically have many mages. Such quality and quantity suggest state involvement. They might have considered hostile actions against us as early as spring.”

“I see.”

If Eneria was behind the attack, then the prospects for food aid or my mother’s treatment seemed bleak. My diplomatic mission in spring must have seemed ridiculous to Eneria.

“They failed despite their audacity. They’ll realize we know. They might launch a more overt attack next.”

“Indeed.”

Regardless of the reason for the attack, if the perpetrators were truly from Eneria, it would escalate into an international issue. The atmosphere grew tense, each person realizing the gravity.

“Therefore, we must return to the capital immediately. Although unlikely, if Eneria attacks head-on, the kingdom will need to address threats from both west and east.”

“Agreed. By the way, are there any sheep farms near the Border Capital?”

“Um? Indeed, there are. May I ask why?”

“Good. Let’s gather sheep to the capital. It’s the Fairy Lord’s will.”

“What? During this emergency... But the Fairy Lord has saved us before in inexplicable ways. My daughter’s sight was restored; I have nothing but gratitude.”

“Yes, Father. The Fairy Lord also showed me a flock of sheep. I didn’t understand the intention, but the Fairy Lord has been with the princess the longest. Surely, the sheep will save us.”

“Very well.”

The Border Earl consented to gather sheep. While I didn’t understand the Fairy Lord’s intentions, I trusted in her. After all, it seemed sheep would save the kingdom.

# Chapter 163 - A Sound Strategy

Within a brilliantly illuminated chamber along the eastern border fortifications, several key figures convened to strategize as the dawn of war loomed. Today, on the inaugural day of the Garm's appearance, there had been little movement.

However, the consensus was clear: by the second day, the enemy would undoubtedly strike.

As the second prince of the kingdom, I had spent the past few years stationed along the border. Never before had a member of the imperial family ventured this close. Such a move suggested either a significant opportunity for victory on both sides or a desperate gamble.

"Your Highness, isn't it a bit audacious to use that as a mere source of illumination?"

The casual tone of the comment was incongruous for the royal court but acceptable in a war room. Over time, even my own demeanor had grown less formal.

"Why not? It's more luminous than any lamp or magical tool, and it requires neither oil nor mana to sustain," I replied, referring to the Fairy Sword suspended in the room's center.

The Fairy Sword hung from the ceiling where a conventional magical illuminator might have been. With a mere thought, it bathed the room in a comforting glow. Its utility was unparalleled.

While the Fairy Sword dominated the conversation, everyone's attention was divided between the sword and the chamber's entrance. A flag hanging there could signify an intruder. Given reports of enemy spies capable of invisibility, such precautions were not unwarranted.

"Let's refocus. The enemy numbers fifteen thousand, a considerable force. Our garrison within the fortress is four thousand. While the

odds aren't insurmountable, we must recognize the peril," I stated, redirecting the conversation to the matters at hand.

Across the mountainous terrain that separated our kingdoms, the situation was tense. We occupied the fortress, while they prepared for a siege. The enemy's disposition was clear from the map laid out before us, revealing their troop deployments and intentions.

"Could this be a feint? They seem to have an excessive number of magical artillery vehicles," someone pondered aloud.

"Perhaps they are trying to mislead us into believing they possess more magicians than they actually do," another speculated.

The discussion continued, dissecting each detail and potential scenario. From the magic-infused adventures of our scouts to the unique capabilities of our own king, every factor was considered.

"Regardless," I interjected, "if they breach our gates with those magical artillery vehicles, our defenses will crumble. Our best chance lies in leveraging our unique assets, such as the Fairy Sword."

The room fell silent, the weight of our impending decisions pressing upon us. Yet, amidst the uncertainty, a glimmer of hope emerged.

"Very well," I concluded, "We have options on the table, strategies devised by the brightest minds in the capital. It's time to adapt and refine our plans. Tomorrow marks a decisive moment for the kingdom."

"Understood," came the unanimous reply.

And so, with the fate of the kingdom hanging in the balance, we delved deeper into the night, refining our strategies for the battle that awaited us on the morrow.

# Chapter 164 - Light

As the night wore on, rain suddenly began to fall, accompanied by a rising wind. The ground beneath became muddy as a result. Gazing up, the starry sky felt strangely incongruous as I surveyed the enemy fortress.

The plan had been in motion for ten years prior to the ceasefire, originally intended to overthrow the kingdom over a few more years. However, due to the impatience of the second prince's faction, driven by their desire for glory amid the succession dispute, the timeline had been accelerated to conclude within the year. That insatiably ambitious minister was entirely to blame.

I couldn't help but recall how everything started to go awry when rain began to fall in the kingdom. The plan involved harnessing immense magical power to create droughts, fostering magical reservoirs, and then spawning powerful monsters from these reservoirs. That's what I heard from the minister, at least. Yet what emerged were incomprehensible fairies that thoroughly disrupted our designs.

By dawn, the rain showed no signs of letting up. Though the Garm season made it difficult to discern daybreak, it was still brighter than the night.

On the second day, no word arrived of the stampede's success. Our troops should have guided the unique creatures from the Troll Forest toward the town by now, triggering the stampede. Yet there was no sign of panic from the enemy. It would be prudent to assume a failure. The disruption from behind was unlikely.

I had managed to procure the infamous magical sword from the reluctant minister, deploying it to the battlefield.

However, I hadn't yet unleashed its magical blade. It would be a potent asset, and the kingdom surely recognized its power. It wasn't a resource to squander. Timing would be everything.

Additionally, reports from reconnaissance indicated an unusual magical presence, a force so significant that it unnerved some of our mages. What could possess greater magical power than the sword we had taken from the kingdom? Too many variables had emerged in recent months.

“Marshal! It’s already dawn. How much longer will you keep us waiting?”

The second prince’s urgency was palpable. It was curious for him to venture out personally upon sensing imminent victory. The first prince’s faction, predominantly military, had been burdened with his protection, despite the fact that his incompetence was well-acknowledged. The minister merely sought a puppet. For the empire’s future, the first prince was undoubtedly the rightful successor.

Despite my desire to eliminate this inept prince amid the chaos of war, I couldn’t afford defeat. A loss here would invite aggression from neighboring nations come spring. With the kingdom’s atrocities exposed, swift conquest was imperative.

There was no turning back.

Moreover, the Garm season was already in its second day. As the sun seldom shone during Garm, temperatures would plummet. Although temperatures might rise slightly after Garm, winter would soon follow. Time was of the essence.

Yet, as the prince asserted, the current kingdom was a mere shadow of its former self. Its competent individuals had been systematically eliminated, leaving a dispirited populace. Despite the recovery potions they’d managed to procure, even their trump card—the magical sword—was now in our possession. Victory was assured.

“Very well, prepare to advance.”

“Advance!”

“Advance!”

The sound of gongs and horns echoed, signaling the full-scale assault. As the front lines advanced, arrows rained down from the enemy fortress.

“Charge, infantry! Mercenaries, forward!”

With another blast of gongs and horns, soldiers armed with shovels and shields surged forward. Their primary task was to clear obstacles—destroying barricades, filling moats—rather than engage with swords or spears. Though the shields were not enchanted, they would suffice against arrows. The enemy mages were scarce; no signs of their notorious “Demon of the Kingdom” or “Fey Maidens” were evident. Victory seemed within grasp.

However, just as cavalry and magical artillery prepared for the final push, an unforeseen event occurred.

“Ah! Blinding light!”

“My eyes! I can’t see!”

Suddenly, an overwhelming radiance emanated from the enemy fortress. It was as if an unseen sun had descended upon the battlefield, blinding all in its path.

“Gah!”

A chorus of screams filled the air. Before we could recover our sight, half of our magical artillery lay decimated. Those who managed to erect defensive spells survived.

“Retreat! Sound the retreat!”

Gongs and horns blared once more. The signal to withdraw had been given. Despite the chaos, the ability to sound the retreat was a stroke of luck.



However, many remained disoriented, their vision impaired. We needed to regroup swiftly. Observing the fortress, it seemed the gates remained sealed. Mercifully, no pursuit ensued.

“Fall back! They’ve reverted to arrow attacks! No pursuit!”

As I shouted, I realized the rain had ceased.

# Chapter 165 - Next Steps

“It went even better than expected.”

“Indeed! I can’t stop laughing!”

The results on the first day of the war culminated in a resounding victory, reducing the enemy by around a thousand and forcing them to retreat. Although more than 14,000 still remained, this victory was substantial. The significant reduction of the enemy’s cavalry and mages would undoubtedly have a profound impact on future engagements. The morale within the fortress visibly soared, revealing a clear path to success.

The scant preparation of siege weapons by the Empire indicated their intention to swiftly bypass this fortress. Given the disruption of those plans, they must be scrambling to revise their strategies.

“They’ll need time to regroup; I doubt they’ll launch another attack today.”

“Yes, inform the wielder of the Fairy Sword to rest while they can. Rotate the other soldiers for breaks.”

The Master Mage showed keen interest in the Water Fairy Sword, having conducted extensive research on it. Initially, it seemed they considered its applications in agriculture and water supply. However, the novelty lay in its unique ability to utilize water magic for offense. Amid a scarcity of mages employing water magic offensively, I had been thoroughly briefed on how the Fairy Sword could sever with water-based enchantments—though I’ve since forgotten the specifics.

Through this research, it became apparent that the Fairy Sword’s capabilities extended beyond merely projecting magical blades. The tactics employed against the Empire this time were a testament to these advanced applications.

First, during the night, the Water Fairy Sword dispersed countless droplets into the air, which the Wind Fairy Sword propelled towards the Empire's encampment, creating artificial rain. This inundated the road between the Empire's camp and the fortress, significantly hampering their mobility. While demanding an all-night effort from the wielders of the Water and Wind Fairy Swords, the strategy proved effective.

Given the enemy's obvious intent to breach a singular point, we feigned resistance, drawing them in. Upon their approach, a prearranged signal prompted everyone to close their eyes for five seconds, after which the Light Fairy Sword shone brilliantly. Though I expected mere illumination, the radiance emitted significant heat, enough to leave a lingering sensation of warmth.

While their vision was impaired, we unleashed a full-scale assault, involving the Fairy Swords. To maintain their secrecy, we withdrew the Fairy Swords once the enemy retaliated. Their subsequent actions dictated the outcome, which culminated in their retreat.

"So, what's the plan for tomorrow?"

"Well, even with the Fairy Swords, we should further diminish their numbers before launching a full-scale assault. Their forces are too numerous to engage outside the fortress."

"There's no need to annihilate them entirely. We need only defend this place until the Garm season ends."

"True, we just need to buy time... Perhaps it's time to deploy our secret weapon."

"My Lord, you're looking rather pleased."

"A secret weapon?"

"Indeed."

I picked up a wooden box from the corner of the room and placed it on the table, unable to hide a smirk creeping onto my face.

“Oh, that arrived with the Fairy Swords, didn’t it? Referred to as a ‘trump card.’”

“Is this the so-called ‘trump card’? Just an old doll?”

“Careful. Touch that tiny sword, and you’ll lose a finger.”

“Ugh. So, what’s the plan with this?”

“Attach this stone to its chest, and it goes berserk, swinging its sword indiscriminately, be it through iron bars or an Orc King.”

I showed them the small, translucent stone accompanying the doll. Placing one of the enemy tokens from the map onto the sword, it cleanly severed the wooden piece upon contact.

“Is that so?”

“Exactly. Toss this into the enemy lines. Use a catapult.”

Having once saved the royal capital, this Berserker Fairy Doll might now save our borders. With the right timing, it could even incapacitate an Imperial Prince.

“Heh, cunning.”

Deploying it just before their sortie might buy us the time we need. If all goes well, we might just take down an Imperial Prince with ease.

# Chapter 166 - Board Game

Yesterday, I found myself reveling in festivities with fellow adventurers, causing our return to the castle to be exceptionally late. The transition from daylight to darkness seemed almost imperceptible, playing tricks on my sense of time. Truly disorienting, indeed.

Waking up today, the ambiance remained dim. Observing the sun, I noticed it had shifted slightly from being just on the edge of the white rainbow yesterday to now residing a bit more inward.

Ah, I surmise we are to endure these shadowed days until the sun completes its passage through the white rainbow.

Lacking precise recollection of yesterday's position, I estimate we have at least another five days of this gloom. Perhaps it won't extend beyond a fortnight, for while the sun descends with the encroaching winter, the rainbow seems to ascend.

During summer, the rainbow presumably hovered lower. Familiarity had blinded me, but now I wonder if, during the height of summer, it was concealed behind southern mountains, hence my lack of memory regarding a summer rainbow.

Ah, the epiphany strikes! That rainbow is akin to a planetary ring—a spectacle reminiscent of Saturn's rings. In summer, the sun aligns above the ring, while in winter, it positions itself below. Hence, during spring and autumn equinoxes, the sun hides behind the rainbow.

Could it be the autumn equinox now? Or perhaps not, given the variations influenced by planetary dimensions and latitudes? Alas, the intricacies elude me.

Lost in these musings, I was soon greeted by the apprentice maid who arrived promptly this morning. Reacting to her presence, the second-generation automaton, which had been facing away, pivoted towards us.

Given our unusually late return last night, the young child had shed tears upon my absence. Despite my internal exasperation, I felt an overwhelming sense of guilt. Being the cause of a child's distress weighs heavily on the spirit.

Thus, venturing outside seemed challenging today. While contemplating post-breakfast activities, the maid returned, carrying a flat box that eerily reminded me of a pizza delivery. A morning pizza for dessert? A tad heavy on the stomach, don't you think?

Upon closer inspection, it became evident it was a wooden box, adorned with gilded edges. Far from containing pizza, it hinted at something far more exquisite. As she unveiled the contents, it revealed a beautifully crafted glass board, segmented by grids and accompanied by an array of pieces.

Ah, a board game, it must be. Such leisure pursuits exist in this realm as well. Yet, their absence in the public sphere suggests they might be exclusive to the affluent, like royalty or nobility.

As the maid gestured towards the opposing side of the board, it became apparent she intended to challenge me. A diversion tactic, no doubt, to engage me in a game.

While the cage maid had learned the dance to deter my outdoor ventures, the apprentice seemed to employ games to keep me occupied—a cunning strategy indeed.

As she arranged transparent pieces resembling red and blue crystals, she began explaining the rules with fervor.

Regrettably, her intricate explanations left me bewildered, filled with terms like “church,” “rotation,” “pilgrimage,”

“summoning,” and “sealing.”

To my right, red pieces stood aligned, while blue ones occupied the diagonally opposite corner. Presumably, I would control the red pieces, and she the blue. The board, adorned with fantastical symbols,

resembled a  $9 \times 9$  grid centered around an emblematic mark.

Distinct pieces—those with swords, shields, and a unique one with an arch—filled the board. The latter, resembling the church's icon, perhaps held a king-like significance. Another set of pieces lay aside—presumably, spares?

With a deliberate move, the maid advanced a piece devoid of any equipment. Understanding dawned slowly; to claim an opponent's piece, one must flank it, replacing it with one's own. Victory would be declared once the arch piece circumnavigated the board, irrespective of the direction.

Subsequent matches clarified some mechanics. Swordsmen could leap over non-shielded adversaries, rendering blockade strategies ineffective. Shields were singular, making extensive blockades unfeasible. Yet, immobilizing the arch or unarmed pieces proved pivotal.

Initially reminiscent of chess, it bore closer resemblance to a race game. However, if both parties moved in opposing directions, it escalated into full-fledged conflict—a complexity that continues to confound me.

—And before I knew it, the day had drawn to a close.

# Chapter 167 - Hostility

“Welcome back. You’re late.”

“Welcome home!”

Servants lined up on both sides, welcoming the Margrave and us. This marked my third visit to the Margrave’s residence, a place that always stirred complex emotions within me.

The first time was when I traveled to Eneria to request aid for our kingdom’s food shortage and treatment for my mother’s curse. I remember feeling nervous during my first diplomatic mission. Back then, I never met Elett, as he was suffering from an eye ailment. Although Elett’s eyes have since healed, and he has become more amiable, his initial reception was notably cold.

The second visit was upon my return from Eneria after facing rejection and harsh realities. Looking back, it felt like our kingdom had hit rock bottom. Had it not been for the encounter with the fairy, our nation might have faced destruction.

Now, on my third visit, anger consumed me. A glance at Nyshe revealed her calm demeanor, a stark contrast to my turbulent emotions. Her composure made me realize how immature my own feelings were.

“My lord!”

The old butler approached the Margrave with urgency, whispering something in his ear. A sense of foreboding washed over me, confirmed by the Margrave’s somber expression.

“...As I suspected,” he murmured.

“Did you anticipate this?”



“Yes, let’s discuss this later.”

The butler glanced at me, noting my pale complexion. Clearly, the journey had taken its toll, and we had arrived several days later than planned.

“Your Highness, while we’d normally host a welcoming feast, there’s urgent matters to discuss. Let’s move to a more appropriate location.”

We were ushered into a makeshift conference room. The Margrave revealed troubling news: Eneria was advancing with 5,000 troops. This wasn’t the work of a rogue noble but a nation’s orchestrated move.

“What’s our plan?” I inquired.

An official unfurled a map, indicating the enemy’s position and their proximity to our fortifications. Despite our best efforts, devising a strategy seemed elusive.

Interrupting the discussion, I proposed gathering sheep for a specific purpose. The officials looked puzzled, skeptical of such an unconventional idea. Despite my attempts to explain, even with the Margrave’s support, my proposal was met with resistance.

After a lengthy discussion, the idea was ultimately rejected. Yet, I persisted, suggesting alternative contributions to the front lines.

The Margrave apologized for the lack of immediate support but promised to lend some of his resources. He then departed for the front lines, leaving me with a sense of determination. Though the council may have dismissed my ideas, the urgency of the situation demanded action, and I was resolved to contribute in any way I could.

## Chapter 168 - Secret

“Damn it! How did that barrier information slip through? Ah... My arm won’t move,” the man who had presumably kidnapped me muttered, pouring potion over a wound on his left shoulder.

He was clearly in pain. Once a swordsman when I last saw him, he now appeared more like a mage.

“Hey, you muscle-bound oaf, you’re the former Guildmaster of the Farsian Royal Capital Adventurer’s Guild, aren’t you?

There were gaps in the information you provided! You must know something you haven’t shared!” The man’s eyes flared with urgency as he interrogated me. Given the extent of his injury, even a regular healing potion wouldn’t be enough for his left hand. He must have been through some ordeal, likely involving the Farsian Kingdom.

He seemed convinced that I was under some sort of spell. While I was technically a captive, my apparent compliance was merely an act. By observing others around me—dozens of individuals, all seemingly under a trance—I had a sense of how to feign being under the influence.

“I have divulged... all that you have asked,” I replied, avoiding direct eye contact. I had indeed shared almost all pertinent information, especially regarding the well-known incidents involving fairies. To claim ignorance as a former Guildmaster would expose my feigned trance.

“The barrier! The princess had a magical device that formed a barrier. You must know something about it, right? It’s so compact that it can fit into an earring yet powerful enough to neutralize magic attacks at close range.”

“I know nothing... of concealed equipment belonging to the royal family. The Adventurer’s Guild does not possess such information,” I retorted. I genuinely knew nothing; the Farsian Kingdom had been

struggling, and selling off its treasures, let alone keeping high-grade magical barriers.

Perhaps my lack of compliance was due to the fairy's intervention. I recalled the fairy tea I received as a parting gift, known for its mental stability effects. Knowing the fairy, it could potentially shield one from adverse mental effects entirely.

"Damn it, useless! What about measures against invisibility tools? What was Farsian planning?" he pressed.

"Only... hanging banners... at entrances," I replied, recalling the limited countermeasures Farsian had considered.

But why ask now? Had he been wounded by an invisibility tool?

"Enough! You seem to know nothing!" He erupted, clearly frustrated.

I couldn't help but think that the current state of affairs was the fairy's doing. There was an uncanny foresight in their actions, including preparing for my potential capture by Enerugia.

Enerugia was dangerous. Their mages transformed lives into magical energy. The surroundings revealed the gruesome truth: unlawfully captured individuals rendered into energy sources.

It was unsettling how Enerugia's magic prowess stood out among neighboring nations. I needed to act, disrupt their operations, and expose their atrocities. I sensed that this was what the fairy expected of me.

Enerugia was preparing to attack Farsian, shifting their forces eastward. This was an opportune moment to act. I approached a distracted man, struck him on the head, and swiftly took his dagger and flask. With this water, I would make fairy tea to free everyone held captive here. I might be playing into the fairy's plans, but for once, I was willing to meet those expectations.

# Chapter 169 - Halt

Certainly... sheep, of all things.

Having risen through the ranks to become one of the foremost mages in the great magical empire, I've absorbed a plethora of knowledge along the way. Yet, releasing a flock of sheep for urban defense was beyond my comprehension. When the scouts first reported it, I thought it ludicrous. Yet, there they were, a vast flock of sheep right before me.

I had infiltrated across borders under the cloak of darkness, decimating forts along the way with grand spells, intending to march swiftly to the frontier without pause. To think that such momentum could be halted by a mere flock of sheep—it vexed me, especially with time not on my side.

“Is it customary in Farsian to pasture sheep during the Garm season?”

“No, I've never heard of such a thing. Our livestock practices are not vastly different from yours. Moreover, recent reconnaissance showed no sheep near the frontier,” came the reply.

Then, these sheep should be safely tucked away in their pens at this time of year. What could possibly be the intent behind this?

“Sheep pose no hindrance to our forces. Just scatter them and proceed, yes?”

“Hmph, if only it were that simple... Most likely, that fairy is involved. No other reason would justify such an absurd tactic. If a fairy is behind this, meddling recklessly could lead to unforeseen consequences.”

“Indeed,” came the puzzled response.

If the tales from the captured former Guildmaster of the Farsian Adventurer's Guild were true, then all the covert operations we'd launched against the empire had been thwarted by this enigmatic fairy. Even someone as astute as I couldn't fathom the whimsical actions of such a creature.

With the possibility of the fairy's involvement, one couldn't act hastily, regardless of how bizarre or seemingly inconsequential the obstacle.

Moreover, the enchantment that had been meticulously cast upon the nobility of northern Farsian seemed to have been dispelled. We had intended to weaken the Earl by assassinating his wife and blinding his remaining daughter. Yet, it appeared the fairy had healed the daughter's blindness—a feat beyond mortal capabilities. This setback had slowed our advance more than anticipated.

Now this.

I glanced at my wrist; time was undeniably running short.

“Master, it appears the flock of sheep is swelling toward us.”

“Hmm... We can't predict what might happen. Withdraw a bit,” came the command.

Could there be a better plan? Ultimately, there remained the option for me alone to teleport to the capital of Farsian.

Fortunately, a large summoning circle had already been established near the capital. The necessary personnel for the ritual were on standby. Although executing such a massive summoning might cost me dearly in vitality, it seemed unavoidable.

“Master, I bring news.”

“What is it?”

“It appears that the First Princess of Farsian is residing at the Earl’s mansion. Holding her hostage could expedite our march.”

“The First Princess... that young girl who arrived six months ago, is it? Very well, leave it to me. We shall bring the young Farsian maiden here.”

“Understood!”

# Chapter 170 - Determination

Observing the Eneria forces deployed to the west of the city, it appeared that they had swiftly crushed the frontier Earl's army gathered at the fortress and were now advancing toward the Earl's capital with alarming speed, even faster than the fleeing soldiers from the fortress.

The battle at the fortress seemed outrageously one-sided, almost not worthy of being called a battle. A single grand spell had apparently obliterated the entire fortress. The whereabouts of the Earl remained unknown, and I had never witnessed a magic of such magnitude that could decimate an entire fortress in one fell swoop.

No one had expected Eneria to advance this rapidly towards the Earl's capital, leaving its defenses surprisingly thin, almost nonexistent.

The private armies of surrounding nobles were too far away, heading toward the fortress. Even if they were urgently summoned, it would take at least half a day for them to arrive.

"That... seems to have had an effect."

"Yes, indeed."

What saved the city from an immediate onslaught was an unexpected savior: sheep. About 150 sheep arranged by the Earl before his departure had arrived just in time. As soon as they were hastily moved outside the city walls in response to Eneria's advance, the Eneria forces halted.

They hadn't paused out of concern for the defense capabilities of the Earl's capital but clearly due to the sheep. Whenever the sheep moved unpredictably, the Eneria forces would retreat in tandem.

"Why would they be wary of sheep?"

“I cannot say for certain. However, it seems the Fairy anticipated this.”

“A cunning fairy... I was skeptical, but now I have no choice but to believe. If only we can buy enough time for reinforcements to arrive...”

Reinforcements. Would their arrival truly make a difference? After all, they had shattered the fortress with a single spell.

Could any number of troops withstand such magic?

Yet, thanks to the Fairy’s ingenuity, we had bought some time. And time was not to be squandered. Perhaps there was a chance for a turnaround. The Fairy had provided something valuable—a few items at my disposal. My barrier, Siluela’s offensive magic, and the potion... were no longer available. What remained were the Fairy Dolls.

Six dolls were brought along, intended for a noble who had placed a reservation. Four had already been delivered, one was damaged during an ambush, and the remaining one was in Elett’s possession. But how could an immobile Fairy Doll be used effectively in combat?

“Can we turn the tide with reinforcements?”

I posed the question to a balding man beside me. It would be more prudent to let those on the ground propose strategies.

Speaking too much might lead to the same debacle as yesterday’s meeting. Mother seldom spoke but skillfully directed her vassals. Perhaps that was the ideal demeanor for royalty.

“We could potentially flank them with our remaining forces and the reinforcements, then strike with a grand spell when they’re distracted. Your Highness, may I borrow your maid?”

The balding man glanced at Siluela. Both Siluela and Nyshe had showcased their magical prowess the previous night.



While I had concerns about the specifics of their strategy, it was best not to interfere too much.

“Siluela, are you prepared?”

“I shall execute the given instructions.”

“Very well...”

The plan was set. It was best to remain calm now. An escortee who couldn't fight but constantly moved was as troublesome as they came. Furthermore, I worried about Elett. Already shocked by Eneria's advance, he now faced uncertainty about the safety of his father and siblings. He must be mentally distressed.

Arriving at Elett's quarters with Nyshe and a single guard, we found him clutching a Fairy Doll, visibly distraught. I tried to reassure him that reinforcements would arrive soon and that his father was likely safe. But he was not naive; he understood the grim reality. As someone younger and without exceptional abilities, my grasp of the situation was undoubtedly transparent.

Suddenly, the room's door crashed inward. Had it been kicked down? Three guards, one of mine and two of Elett's, were stationed outside!

“Who are you?!”

“It's her! The princess! The other one looks more like a princess than that brat!”

“Siluela, can you handle this?”

“Of course, Your Highness. I shall do my utmost.”

A sense of impending doom washed over us. Yet, with determination, we would face it head-on.

# Chapter 171 - Responsibility

Thud.

The invisibility was lifted, and the man fell. In an instant, the guards had neutralized him. Two more men lay inside the room, another I had blasted near the open door, and a magician, likely the one who had attacked the door, lay further down the corridor.

“Hmm... it seems they are no longer among us,” observed one of the guards, scanning the room before sheathing his sword and securing the incapacitated men. He instructed Elett’s attendant to summon more help and went to detain the magician lying down the hall.

“How did you determine their positions? It was as if you could see them,” I inquired.

“There are various cues. The carpets in this room and corridor would show footprints if they moved. Displaced furnishings would indicate someone’s presence,” he explained.

“I see,” I responded.

He had observed so keenly in the heat of the moment. Was this level of vigilance something anyone accustomed to close combat could manage? While attending to Nyshe, the guard continued, “Even on a hard floor, if the attacker is inexperienced, you can often hear their movements.”

“Such skills seem quite complex. I doubt I could manage them during combat,” I mused.

As he spoke, he continued to care for Nyshe. I moved closer to Elett, ensuring she was unharmed, albeit shaken. Relief washed over me.

“You may possess an advantage, though. I cannot sense magical energies, but given your training in magic, could you not detect their presence even when invisible?” he suggested.

“A valid point. I should explore that,” I acknowledged.

Later, after experimenting with the captured invisibility tools, we learned much. The robes the men wore were the invisibility devices. Simply donning them rendered one invisible. However, it seemed that without a certain magical aptitude, one couldn’t activate the invisibility. The guard couldn’t use it, but Elett could, suggesting the robe tapped into the wearer’s magical essence.

Activation and deactivation of invisibility were controlled at the collar. Yet, after a certain duration, the invisibility would naturally dissipate, a time determined by the user’s magical stamina. Nyshe’s cloak had the longest duration.

Moreover, once used, the cloaks required a cooldown period before reactivation. This limitation was invaluable.

Otherwise, crucial figures in the capital might have fallen victim to assassinations.

As the guard had mentioned, if someone emitting magical energy were invisible, a trained individual might still detect them. However, if they intentionally suppressed their magic, detection would prove challenging. The Eneria faction likely knew this and would act cautiously while invisible.

A startling revelation was that splashing them with water would make them briefly visible. This undermined some of the countermeasures we had discussed for the capital. I needed to relay this intelligence urgently.

“Please inform the key figures in the border city and the capital immediately. As for me... Perhaps I should refrain from meddling further and stay with Elett,” I considered.

“Do not underestimate yourself,” the guard interjected, locking eyes with me. “You’ve faced criticism for recklessness and narrow-mindedness. But becoming too self-deprecating isn’t wise. People will lose confidence in you.”

He continued, “Sometimes bold action is necessary. As long as you’re prepared to accept responsibility for your actions, it will be fine. People fear the repercussions of your decisions.”

Responsibility... Yes, the willingness to bear it. Perhaps it was that resolve that had seen us through the assault on the royal palace.

“Summon Siluela. There’s something else I wish to attempt,” I declared.

# Chapter 172 - Chaos

A night had passed since the devastating defeat, spent in soothing the frantic prince, reorganizing the troops, and revising plans to account for the losses among the cavalry and magicians. Just as we prepared for a renewed offensive, a single rock hurtled toward us.

“Your Excellency! It appears to be a projectile, possibly from a catapult!”

“Don’t panic! Determine its trajectory!”

Ordinarily, our Imperial forces would be beyond the range of any catapult from the kingdom’s fortress. Yet it wasn’t inconceivable. If a few magicians focused their energy, they could extend the range, likely using wind magic to boost it.

However, something was amiss. At this distance, dodging such an attack should have been straightforward. Even amidst the dark chaos of Garm’s night, it should have been manageable. The enemy must know this too. To achieve such a range, several magicians would need to exert themselves significantly. The potential payoff seemed too meager for such an expenditure.

Whoosh...

“Any casualties!?”

“...None!”

“Excellent!”

“Huh...?”

“What’s wrong!?”

Moments after reporting no casualties, a soldier let out a bewildered cry. I feared some had been injured by flying debris or tripped over rugged terrain. But it seemed different. Unsettling screams began to echo.

“Ah!”

“Wha- What’s happening? It hurts!”

“My arm!”

“What’s the situation?”

“Ah!”

“What is this thing!?”

“Report the situation!”

What on earth was unfolding? Apparently, the earlier rock had landed near an undisciplined vanguard unit, a makeshift expendable force. No one among them seemed capable of accurately reporting the unexpected. This chaos right before an expedition was disastrous.

“What’s happening!? Are we to repeat yesterday’s debacle?”

The foolish prince’s cries only added to the confusion.

“You! Confirm the situation!”

“Yes, sir!”

I dispatched a nearby subordinate to assess the situation. Yet, in the interim, chaos continued to escalate. Some had drawn their swords, seemingly fighting off some unseen adversary. Startled horses added to the tumult. The orderly formation we had established was now in

disarray.

Flash!

“What was that!?”

“It’s blinding!”

“My horse!”

What had flashed? The sudden glare spooked the horses, leading to a cascade of riders falling. Panic ensued, spiraling beyond control.

“Your Excellency! Fairies! Fairies are attacking!”

“What!?”

Weren’t the fairies missing from the northern lands? Were they lurking all along, targeting our empire?

But we had intelligence indicating their luminescence lacked lethal capability. They weren’t a significant threat. Their mobility was reportedly slow. If approached calmly, they could be felled with swords.

“Calm down! Squad 3, address the fairies! The rest, dismount and regain composure! The enemy is the fairy! It merely glows, no lethal force! Deal with it calmly!”

Squad 3, primarily swordsmen, had been reformed last night. They moved cautiously toward the glowing entities, forming a perimeter.

“Where did it go?”

“Vanished?”

“That’s impossible!”

“What happened!?”

“The fairy disappeared! The moment it retreated— Ahhh!”

In an instant, a blinding flash. When vision cleared, soldiers clutched their wounds, some with severed limbs. Wasn’t their glow harmless? The situation was chaos incarnate.

“Maintain the perimeter! Magicians, incinerate the space Squad 3 is holding!”

“Yes, sir!”

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Rumbles and explosions tore through the air, accompanied by the acrid smell of scorched earth. If only this could end it...

“...”

“Did we do it?”

Flash!

No! They’ve breached the perimeter!

Panic ensued, soldiers fled.

This expedition was a failure.



# Chapter 173 - Do Not Laugh

“Ah, you’re here. Quite prompt,”

“Yes... um, Your Highness the Prince...”

“Hmm, you seem to live up to your reputation,”

The adventurer before me appears to be rather tongue-tied. From the guild’s intelligence, I know he usually operates alone due to his poor conversational skills. Yet, he’s renowned for single-handedly defeating the Orc King, dispersing troll hordes, and even subduing imperial forces. Truly, the world is full of mysteries.

“Your efforts in the Ern Forest were commendable. Thanks to you, the imperial troops no longer pass through our borders. It seems the empire was plotting a troll stampede,”

“Yes...”

Ah, extracting detailed information from him seems tedious. He’s been staring at the floor since our conversation began.

Even an ordinary commoner would find conversing with royalty daunting, so if he’s naturally reticent, this will be a challenge. But I’ve got the gist from the reports, so that should suffice.

“I’ve summoned you because there’s something I’d like you to do,”

“Yes...”

“Let me explain. Imperial troops are currently stationed across the border. This morning, they’ve been thrown into disarray by fairy dolls we’ve deployed. However, they show no signs of retreat,”

“Indeed... and you wish for them to be eradicated?”

Ah, he manages to articulate when needed. That’s reassuring.

“Yes. We have fairy swords imbued with water, wind, and light. However, these blades don’t penetrate anti-magic shields. This is where your earth fairy sword comes into play. During the previous attack on the royal castle, you destabilized those with anti-magic shields using an earth fairy sword, creating openings for other attacks,”

“I see... understood,”

“We’ll launch a cavalry charge soon. I need you to engage those with anti-magic shields and retrieve the fairy dolls. Can you ride?”

“Yes... I mean, no horse is needed. I’m faster than a horse,”

“Oh?”

“I can run faster than a horse,”

“Very well, understood,”

We must conclude this before the enemy regains composure. Five hundred cavalry troops, including myself, are already on standby.

“Ready? Let’s go,”

“Your Highness, it’s perilous for you to join,”

“It’s too late for that. My demise won’t impact us. Charge!”

Cheers erupt.

The fortress gates swing open, and the cavalry surges forward. The adventurer keeps pace, effortlessly running alongside the horses. If he's enhanced by fairies, then perhaps my father, also enhanced, could do the same. Imagining a king outrunning horses feels surreal.

—Whoosh!

Arrows fly. Focus. I raise my shield and swing the light fairy sword. A single stroke turns the enemy archers and their rear ranks to dust.

The morale surges with the might of the fairy sword. However, its power may be unwieldy. Unlike water and wind, it doesn't weaken on impact, cutting through everything in its path. Not suitable for skirmishes, small encounters, or urban warfare. It would destroy buildings.

Using the light fairy sword for broad strokes, the water and wind swords for finer adjustments, we make headway. The adventurer adeptly handles those with anti-magic shields.

“Halt! Or be rust on my magic blade!”

Our charge is progressing when two skilled warriors confront us. Their equipment suggests they hold significant rank.

That sword—!

“Continue! Veer right, skim past the enemy and withdraw!”

But they're skilled. They close in on our flank with an arcing trajectory. One of them swings a shortsword that glows ominously. I can't afford to falter. I can't afford to laugh. Hold on... but...

—Flop.

The swung sword bends, ineffective.

In the end, our kingdom's forces successfully detain the empire's second prince without losing momentum, thus ending the war with the empire.

It concluded remarkably smoothly. Retrieving the fairy dolls was perhaps the most challenging part.

# Chapter 174 - Old Bastard

Hidden amidst the foliage, I observe the forces of Eneria.

“Princess, please be cautious. Their command is vigilant.”

“I’m aware.”

Thanks to the alliance of nearby nobles, we’ve trapped the Eneria forces, gathering private troops on the opposite side of the Margrave’s capital. Even the routed soldiers from the destroyed fort have joined us, forming a noble army ready for a counterattack. Among them, I catch a glimpse of the Margrave himself.

“Those invisibility magical tools have time constraints... Timing is crucial,” I mumble.

“Don’t be reckless, Princess.”

“I have a protective barrier; I’ll be fine.”

As I focus on the Eneria forces, two conflicting aspects of myself emerge: the one calmly assessing the enemy’s movements and the one wandering off-topic, contemplating the scent of soil. It’s an odd sensation. Although I feel the crawling of insects on my skin, I cannot move. I am in the midst of a critical operation.

First, I need to get as close as possible to the Eneria forces and locate my revered mentor, an elderly mage. Interrogating captured assailants revealed that only this mentor possesses the ability to obliterate a fortress in one strike.

Once I find him, I’ll use the invisibility tool to approach alone. The plan: assassinate him with a dagger—Plan A. If Plan A fails, I’ll signal Siluela atop the Margrave’s battlements, and she’ll eliminate him using her magic—Plan B.

Both plans hinge on the protective barrier provided by the fairy lord. It's confirmed that this barrier can withstand Siluela's full power. I intend to part ways with my guards here; from this point forward, I'm on my own.

My personal bias tells me that significant figures should be in luxurious positions. Using this criterion, I scrutinize the Eneria forces. After a painstaking crawl through the grass, just as my knees begin to ache intolerably, I spot a mage-like figure.

An elderly man sits on a makeshift throne, distinct amidst the gloom. Despite the dim light obscuring his face, his overwhelming magical aura is unmistakable.

"I've found him," I whisper.

"Ah, I see."

"Given the circumstances, I have ample time to execute the plan once I'm invisible. The rear noble forces should move soon. Let's observe a bit longer."

"Understood."

—Whoosh... Boom!

"What!?"

A crimson line connects the Eneria and noble forces, and a third of our troops vanish instantly. A deafening explosion ensues, threatening to disorient even from this distance. Our protective barriers didn't activate; was it not an attack?

"To think their magic could be so devastating... It's beyond rumors. Princess, it's perilous."

“Seeing that only reinforces the necessity of my plan. Confronting such power head-on is futile. I’ll handle this.”

“But—”

“I assure you... there’s absolutely no problem, right?”

I offer a sly smile, and my guard returns a wry one.

“Please... promise you’ll return.”

“Naturally.”

Activating my invisibility, I sprint forward. From here on, it’s a solo mission. Failure isn’t an option; while I might survive, the kingdom likely won’t. Ideally, I’d execute Plan A with a single dagger strike. Siluela’s grand magic requires a noticeable buildup. Any observant mage would realize her intent. If she begins her incantation, that Eneria mage could obliterate the Margrave’s battlements and her along with it. Should I resort to Plan B, disrupting that mage becomes imperative.

Silently weaving through the Eneria soldiers, I must remain unnoticed while maintaining utmost vigilance. Delay too long, and my invisibility will fade.

Struggling to reach the palanquin, I manage to slip through the attendants surrounding it silently, attempting to ascend without making a sound. Every ounce of magical energy must be restrained; my breath threatens to betray me, each heartbeat pounding like a drum, a cacophony of anxiety.

I stand before the elderly man who gazes towards the noble army. I had hoped to approach from behind, but circumstances allowed only a frontal assault. I draw my knife, steadying my trembling hand. Remain calm; I’m not discovered yet.

Suddenly, the man’s face comes into focus. Despite the dim light of

the Garm season, I can discern distinct peach-colored markings on his face and arms—the same symptoms as the curse inflicted upon my mother!

My hand trembles uncontrollably. The Grand Mage had mentioned that when the curse broke, it rebounded onto its caster.

What did the maid who witnessed the rebound say? She flew towards the west. Yes, the curse rebounded to Eneria!

Damn it! The former prime minister, who succumbed to the initial curse, exhibited symptoms three years ago. It wasn't betrayal from within this spring; it had been betraying us for at least three years. Our nation's decline wasn't the cause of treachery; it was the result of Eneria's betrayal!

“Hm?”

Cursed, I've been detected! My anger surges, breaking my magical restraint. But the distance might still be in my favor. I thrust my arm out, lunging with my dagger aimed at the mage's chest.

“Ha!”

—Clang!

Damn, he blocked it! A translucent blue barrier halts my blade—an arcane defense. I should've struck without hesitation.

But there's still time for invisibility. I'll circle around and try again.

“Who goes there!? Show yourself!”

“What!?”

The elderly man's casual shout nullifies my invisibility.



“Ah, a young Farsian maiden. Ho ho ho! We developed the invisibility magical tools; of course, we have counters.”

Cursed again! I hadn’t considered he’d have a countermeasure.

“Capture her! Sever her limbs if you must!”

“Yes, sir!”

Maintain composure. With a protective barrier, I can still recover. Enderia soldiers approach, but they’re inconsequential.

“Siluelaaaaa!”

With a fierce cry, I unleash my magic, flames soaring high.

“Hmph, a desperate attack? —What? This magical power!”

Immediately, a vast magical force starts gathering in the Margrave’s capital. The message got through; Siluela has begun her incantation.

“You’re dealing with me!”

“Tricks won’t save you! Fairies!?”

Simultaneously casting a spell, I hurl my Ellette fairy doll concealed at my waist. The old man’s attention shifts to the doll, and then his vision is consumed by a blinding light. Siluela’s grand magic detonates!

Endure the surrounding light and noise for a few seconds. What remains are me, protected by my barrier, and the old man, barely standing thanks to his defensive magic. He’s resilient, but surely at death’s door. Yet, he can still cast magic instantly. I press my dagger to his throat for confirmation.

“Guh... Curse you...”

“You! Are you the one who cursed the former prime minister and queen of Farsian?”

“Heh... yes, that’s right... But now, the curse... it’s killing me...”

“Cursed fool. Why did you march against us now?”

“To seize the Holy Crystal and Spirit Stone in Farsian. With them, the curse could be undone. But you returned our curse, leaving us no choice but to advance. Regardless, Farsian would have fallen.”

“Could you be behind the Stampede as well?”

“Hehe... indeed. We used a massive teleportation spell to send the orcs from our empire straight into Farsian!”

So that’s it. Traces of specialized magic were detected at the Stampede origin, but it seemed inconceivable that the empire possessed such arcane prowess.

“Moreover... the massive teleportation utilized the fairy’s Spirit Stone you so cherished. Ironically, the very stone you believed would protect you caused the Stampede.”

Silence follows. I’ve asked what needed asking. It’s enough.

“Hehe, you won’t get me so easily... Teleport!”

“Ah!”

Cursed at the final moment! Amidst the scent of burning flesh, all I can do is stare blankly at the vacant throne before me...

# Chapter 175 - Abduction

Current period goal achievement report and submission of goals for the next period!

Current period goal achievement report and submission of goals for the next period!

Even though Garm period is the deadline, time is running out! Before the fairy lord arrives, I thought I had plenty of time, but there's a surprisingly large amount of paperwork! Oh no...

"Guildmaster, it's endless!"

"No worries, you've got this, Risty-san. Do your best, new Vice-Guildmaster."

"Ugh..."

Being a Vice-Guildmaster isn't a glamorous position. Since entering the Garm period, adventurers are just drinking in the tavern below. Fewer quests are taken, so the other staff seem idle...

Well, it's not that they're genuinely idle; they're on standby. There's a high possibility that the empire will attack during Garm period, so everyone is on standby. In case of another Stampede like before, it's the adventurers who will handle it.

That's why the guild is recommending standby during this year's Garm period, though they haven't disclosed the reason.

And just because it looks like they're free doesn't mean I can ask for help. After all, this year's documents are filled with confidential information. I can't involve regular staff. The senior who knows a lot is on vacation... Somehow, they managed to get their leave approved. Quite cunning.

Ah, I wish someone could help. If only the former Guildmaster or Duster-san were here to assist. Perhaps my wish was granted because suddenly...

—Bang!

“Eek!”

The fairy lord is here!

This is bad, really bad! She’s undoubtedly the most troublesome individual who could show up now! She won’t help with work; she’ll likely create even more work!

Moreover, couldn’t the fairy lord have passed through without blowing up the door so dramatically? And there’s an old man floating behind her!

Frozen in shock, I realize I’m floating too.

“Wait, what!? How!?”

Before I knew it, I was abducted by the fairy lord. Ah, the paperwork might be delayed. Headquarters will probably be furious with me...

# Chapter 176 - Summoning

Two days straight of board games, and I'm starting to get bored. No, it's not that; I'm frustrated because I can't win.

Today, I decided I should go out and play. With that thought, I leapt out of the window, leaving behind a maid apprentice with a look of despair. It's okay; I'll be back by nightfall.

As I descended into the town, I sensed something unusual from the outskirts. What could it be? It's a bit far, but should I go check it out?

Scaling the city walls and continuing my flight, I saw a glow in the distance. As I approached, I saw a massive, peculiar mark emanating light. It looks familiar... Ah, it's the emblem from the center of the board game! That grand, fantastical mark was hovering slightly above the ground, shining brightly.

Drawing nearer, I noticed two groups parading around the mark. Above the emblem, an old man with fancy pink markings raised his hands. It looked incredibly suspicious, like some kind of religious ritual.

The mark started resembling a magic circle. With its intensifying glow, an ominous aura grew larger and darker. It's definitely something dangerous emerging from within that circle!

Just as I thought something was rising slowly from the circle, suddenly a massive entity extended from it—a dragon's head! The old man was consumed! Could it be a sacrificial summoning?!

I sensed malevolence emanating fiercely from the dragon. I thought this was a peaceful country, but is there some terrorist organization lurking around? I can't let this go unnoticed; I need to alert everyone!

However, I can't inform everyone by myself. I should notify the authorities in the castle first. Then, we'll need skilled individuals to

defeat the dragon. Speaking of dragon slayers, adventurers come to mind, and adventurers are associated with the Adventurers' Guild. Hurry!

I soared towards the Adventurers' Guild, scanning the premises. They were leisurely eating and drinking, completely unaware that a dragon was wreaking havoc outside!

Firstly, we'll need someone with long-range attack capabilities, like a wizard. Is there anyone resembling a mage here? If not, then...

Ah, there's the archer! The archer I met at the end-of-summer parade! Gotcha!

It's a bit challenging to levitate adults compared to children, but I can manage. I also need someone to negotiate and explain. I spotted a chubby individual and a petite receptionist upstairs.

The archer and I can't carry both of them, so let's take the receptionist. Got her! Now, to the castle, quickly!

With the receptionist and the archer levitating alongside, I burst through the window into my room in the castle. It was a bit of a crash landing, but as long as we're alive, it's fine. There's no time for details; it's an emergency!

The apprentice maid looked startled. The noise of our entrance attracted some people. I need to inform them urgently.

There's an evil dragon about to be summoned outside the city! I remember the word "dragon" from a storybook.

"——!"

Huh?

"——! ——!"

Why can't I make a sound? I understand; I wasn't designed that way. I haven't been breathing either, though I can still smell—quite strange. Ah, I was just starting to learn words.

But it's okay; I have a fantastic item to explain the situation. I unfolded the board game stored in the corner of my room and pointed at it. Then, I raised my hands above the emblem, pretending to be devoured by a dragon. I soared above, flapping my wings vigorously, emphasizing my dragon-like appearance.

...Everyone started speaking frantically. Did they get the message?

Slowly, the petite receptionist took a seat across from me, and the apprentice maid began setting up pieces. No, no! I don't want to play a game; there's a dragon outside!

Um, um...

Ah.

# Chapter 177 - Voice

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“So, why is the submaster of the Adventurer’s Guild here?”

I was asked by a petite maid.

“Well, why indeed?”

After being abducted by the Fairy Lord and hastily brought here, it appeared to be her private chamber within the royal castle. I felt like my arm had been bent in a strange direction during the abrupt entry into the castle, but now it seemed fine. Still, it must have been broken. Does the Fairy Lord think it’s okay if it heals the injury?

“Indy-san, any idea?”

“No...”

The other individual who had been abducted alongside me was Indy-san, a skilled archer who had delivered the fatal shot to the Orc King during the Stampede.

The noise we made upon entering the room had attracted attention, and people were gathering in the corridor. Meanwhile, the Fairy Lord, the instigator of this situation, was casually flying around the room before suddenly laying out a board game on the table. With a gesture towards the board, she began some bizarre movements.

Raising her hands and then suddenly collapsing on the board, everyone was puzzled. However, it seemed there was no cause for concern as she quickly got back up.

“What does this action signify?”



“I don’t know.”

“Is it a challenge? Does her collapse indicate her loss in the game? So, if you defeat the Fairy Lord in this game, there’s some reward?”

Inquiring about the situation from the maid, it seemed the Fairy Lord had been engrossed in this board game for nearly two days straight. How enviable! I had been stuck doing paperwork.

“So, does the Fairy Lord desire a board game opponent? She intentionally loses to entertain guests?”

“No, she’s a cunning Fairy Lord. She must have been losing intentionally.”

“Well, I suppose we’ll understand once we play.”

Perhaps Indy-san was silent because he had been suddenly brought to the royal castle. The onlookers seemed hesitant to intervene. It appeared I had no choice but to participate. Reluctantly, I took a seat opposite the Fairy Lord, with the maid arranging the pieces.

The board game presented was a well-known one, and fortunately, I was familiar with its rules. It was themed around pilgrimage, I had heard. The objective was to move a bishop piece around the board’s corners and return, signifying a journey to various sacred places. Additionally, capturing an opponent’s piece meant converting them to your faith.

However, before we could commence the game...

“Ah, ah, ah.”

“?”

“The Fairy Lord is speaking!”

Her voice was incredibly charming!

“...Dragon, summon, danger.”

“Wow, so adorable!”

“Dragon, summon, danger...”

“Huh?”

Her voice was cute, but the words sounded ominous.

“What did you say!?”

Surprisingly, the Chief Magician was present, exclaiming in astonishment.

“What’s the matter, Chief Magician?”

“This board game, you see, was originally designed to preserve an ancient large-scale summoning ritual for future generations.”

“What? I heard it represented the church’s pilgrimages and conversions.”

The maid’s explanation conflicted with the Chief Magician’s account. I knew the game’s origins matched what the maid described.

“That’s a later-added narrative. Originally, it concealed a massive summoning ritual. Setting up a summoning circle, placing spirit stones at four locations, and two sets of mages channeling magic in a predetermined sequence.”

“So, does this mean a dragon might be summoned somewhere, posing a danger?”

“This cannot be allowed!”

Indeed, the situation was escalating dangerously!

# Chapter 178 - Dragon

It seemed the message about the dragon's threat had resonated, as the denizens of the castle suddenly began to panic.

Unable to produce a normal voice, I managed to articulate sounds quite easily using an application of wind magic. Thank goodness.

When everyone stepped onto the balcony, a dragon soaring in the distant sky came into view. Ah, the stuff of fantasy!

Amidst a dimming sky where the sun hid behind a white rainbow, the dragon emitted a fiery red glow, drawing everyone's attention.

However, something seemed amiss. I had assumed the elderly wizard and the archer would join forces to confront the dragon. Yet, it appeared there was a different plan unfolding.

Dramaturge-sama and the golden-haired brother also arrived. But rather than focusing on the dragon, all eyes were on the model of a white bird, known as Checkera. A pathway formed as King Flash-sama, exuding majesty, advanced with a red sword from my modified treasury and a shield procured from dungeon-clearing rewards.

Could it be? Are they truly planning an aerial battle against the dragon aboard Checkera? That sword might be impressive, originally housed in the treasury, but that shield seemed purely ornamental. It would be disastrous to charge at a dragon with it!

Yet, considering the extraordinary physical abilities and magical existence of this world's inhabitants, perhaps dragon-slaying was a somewhat routine affair here. No one seemed panicked; instead, they looked at King Flash-sama with hopeful eyes.

King Flash-sama locked eyes with me, causing others to follow his gaze. Was I expected to react? Unsure of the appropriate response, I simply nodded. In turn, King Flash-sama nodded back, eliciting cheers from the crowd.

Apparently, nodding was the right choice. While nodding with an elderly leader might entail certain commitments, with King Flash-sama, there were no such implications, especially given the absence of prior conversation.

Amidst this, the dragon drew closer. King Flash-sama inserted a coin into Checkera, and with a burst of speed that defied its appearance, Checkera ascended. Despite the comical imagery of adults on a kiddish ride, the scene was awe-inspiring.

However, danger loomed as the dragon spewed flames toward the city. Not with mere breath but with fiery projectiles that promised devastation. Yet, King Flash-sama, wielding his ornamental shield, charged fearlessly. The shield somehow nullified the flames, leaving many astonished.

Still, Checkera had its vulnerabilities, primarily a time limit discernible only to me. King Flash-sama skillfully caught a descending coin, adjusting Checkera's trajectory for another ascent. Aerial combat ensued, with King Flash-sama wielding a sword whose capabilities astounded everyone.

Luminaries lit up the darkened city, making both the dragon's fire and King Flash-sama's fiery blade more conspicuous.

The dragon swooped and dived, causing those on the balconies to sway with its gusts. Following closely was Checkera, leaving a trail that looked like it engaged in an aerial dogfight.

Suddenly, the dragon aimed its flames at the castle. However, King Flash-sama intercepted, cleaving through the flames.

Astonishingly, the fire dissipated, leading to cheers from the onlookers.

The archer, previously unnoticed, took aim with a peculiar arrowhead—yes, one I recognized from a skewer I'd used.

Perhaps the people of this land could not engage in straightforward combat without an element of humor. This might explain the emergence of heroes like him.

Finally, with a decisive shot from the archer, the dragon plummeted into the forest between the castle and the noble district. Cheers erupted once more.

While initially apprehensive, it seemed unnecessary. In a world where dragons existed, such encounters were presumably manageable. The spectacle was undeniably breathtaking. Though fraught with worry this time, I could find enjoyment in the future.

Checkera finally returned to the castle walls, greeted by waving hands and jubilant faces, including a beaming King Flash-sama.

Checkera crashed into the castle wall, concluding the extraordinary spectacle.

## **Chapter 179 - And Thus, To Legend**

Days after the dragon incident, the sun finally unveiled its face, casting its brilliant warmth upon the land. Ah, the sheer beauty of brightness and warmth!

A few more days passed, and Silver-Haired Girl and Caged-Bird Maid returned. Finally! Now there are individuals unaware of the dragon battle to whom I can passionately recount the tale!

Silver-Haired Girl initially seemed quite disheartened upon her return, but after conversing with everyone, she appeared to regain her spirits. Perhaps she had been homesick during her prolonged absence. Regardless, now that she's in high spirits, it should be okay to engage her in conversation.

Next was Caged-Bird Maid... though that moniker might not be familiar. Ah, yes, her name is...

“Siluela, Siluela.”

When I called her name, Caged-Bird Maid's eyes widened in surprise. Such a startled expression from someone usually as solemn as a

machine—it reminded me of our first meeting. And judging by Silver-Haired Girl’s equally surprised reaction...

“You called XXXmyXXX nameXX!”

Wait, what? She wants me to call her by name? Hmm... what was Silver-Haired Girl’s name again? But given the expectant gaze, I couldn’t admit ignorance. So, taking a leap of faith...

“Tile.”

Silver-Haired Girl beamed with a radiant smile! Correct! A full-faced smile from the usually stoic princess was truly a sight to behold.

Suddenly, I felt a looming presence and turned around to find Door-Up-sama’s face filling my vision. When did he get so close?

What an intense smile emanating a wordless pressure. Ah, it must be one of those events where you get a baby to say a name they’ve just learned. So, what’s Door-Up-sama’s name? How would I know?!

“Door-Up.”

Door-Up-sama slowly shook his head with an enormous smile. The pressure intensified! I knew it! I knew it wasn’t right!

It can’t possibly be ‘Door-Up.’

Then, Caged-Bird Maid softly murmured something.

“—Eliza.”

Door-Up-sama smiled! Correct! Thank you, Caged-Bird Maid!

Ah, the subtle shifts from a smile to a broad grin! Yet, it was all quite

draining.

Soon after, a sort of party commenced, presumably a celebration of the dragon's defeat. Recognizable dishes were presented on luxurious platters... oh no, it's fish pie!

Caged-Bird Maid took the lead in serving. One can't refuse the offering presented. A bite. Yes, the exterior is quite delectable. Another bite...

"It's not good."

Oh no, I said it out loud! A wave of shock rippled through the party venue. I inadvertently let my true feelings slip. What should I do about this atmosphere?

Then, an intruder arrived—Hero-kun had returned. Oh boy, perhaps it would've been better if you hadn't. With a flash of white teeth and a mischievous grin, he approached. He's up to something!

"You called XXXmyXXX nameXX!"

You too?! You want me to call you by name? How would I know your name?

"Hero!"

Instantly, the surroundings buzzed with murmurs. Hero-kun froze, clearly taken aback. Voices echoed, "Hero...?"

"Hero...!"

Hmm, did I inadvertently make them think Hero-kun is a hero? Unlikely. They probably have the basic understanding akin to a toddler's newly acquired vocabulary. But observing everyone's heightened spirits, including Hero-kun's evident delight and Silver-Haired Girl's sparkling eyes...



Oh well, what's the harm?

## **Chapter 180 - The Beginning of Winter**

As the arduous task of document preparation finally drew to a close, a knock heralded a visitor at the Guild Master's chamber.

Exhausted and not in the mood for company, refusing entry wasn't an option. After swiftly tidying up, permission was granted, and in walked...

"Duster-san! You're unbelievably late returning! I thought you'd help with the paperwork, but it's long past the Garm deadline!"

I had expected him back sooner, especially since the troll fur had been delivered ages ago.

"Oh... I was conscripted for the Empire's war at the eastern border."

"What!? Why?"

The ongoing conflict between our kingdom and the empire was still under investigation by the Guild Master, who was compiling a report for the headquarters. Duster's involvement wasn't mentioned.

"Well... various reasons. I expect official communication will come from the royal palace."

"Ugh."

"And regarding the paperwork, the Guild Master was present, wasn't he? Along with other staff?"

"I was working on last period's... no, perhaps I should say the previous period's performance reports and setting goals for this one. Other staff were tallying the performance metrics and objectives of other guild branches within the kingdom. The Guild Master was

collating the involvement of adventurers in the kingdom and empire's conflict. And guess what? Sarah-san took a vacation during that time! Quite surprising!"

The more he spoke, the more infuriated I became.

"And there were incidents with fairies abducting people, dragons appearing, and the former Guild Master returning with a horde of children! The guild turned into a daycare!"

"Ah... huh? Wait, the former Guild Master returned with children? Did he get married?"

"Ha! No way. Could you imagine him getting married and having kids in such a short span?"

If that were the case, the guild would be in an uproar for entirely different reasons.

"Apparently, he rescued a large group of people in Eneria, where some dark rituals were converting life force into magical energy. He brought them back to the kingdom. We took care of the parentless children, over twenty of them."

I'd pushed all the childcare onto Sarah-san. But later, I found out she'd passed it all to the other staff.

Currently, the former Guild Master was summoned to the royal palace, likely being questioned about Eneria.

"So, there was a dragon too?"

"Yes! An actual legendary dragon! The Guild Master confirmed it, likely a Red Dragon. Do you know dragons?

Enormous, red reptiles with bat-like wings that breathe fire? It was massive!"

“I know what a dragon is; everyone’s seen them in fairy tales.”

“You’re so unimpressed. It was awe-inspiring! The king himself battled it in the sky, riding a bird!”

“The king did what now?”

“There’s going to be a theatrical reenactment of that dragon slaying. It’s better seen than explained. Shall we go together?”

Oh, and there’s a specific request for you, Duster-san.”

“A request?”

“Yes, to investigate the dragon’s appearance. The rumor is that someone summoned it. While it’s dubious that anyone could summon a legendary dragon, given the royal request, it’s something we can’t ignore.”

“Summoned? I’m not well-versed in magic or sorcery.”

Duster-san looked perplexed, his usual expression but intensified.

“That’s alright. Think of it more as a guard duty. A team, including mages, will be dispatched from the royal palace for the investigation, and you’ll accompany them.”

“Guard duty? Can’t the palace knights or soldiers handle it? Isn’t the war over?”

That opinion seemed valid. I had initially thought the same.

“Indeed, a substantial portion of the royal resources is being deployed elsewhere,” Duster-san said, his expression wavering between comprehension and confusion. Yet, his consistent demeanor suggested he understood more than he let on. Undeterred, I continued, “There are ceasefire agreements with Eneria. The primary objective is to

seize, investigate, or neutralize nefarious technologies. Both the former Guild Master and the Chief Mage are heading there.”

“Hmm...”

“There’s more. Plans are in motion for prisoner exchanges and ceasefire negotiations with the Empire. Eneria will also accept some aimless refugees.”

“I see...”

“Additionally, the western frontier suffered immensely due to conflicts with Eneria. We’ve confirmed the death of a prominent noble. A delegation is being sent for condolences and reconstruction efforts. There’s also chatter about hosting an ambassador from an eastern nation of the Empire.”

“During winter? Why not wait until spring?”

“Timing is critical. If we don’t act swiftly, illicit technologies could leak to other nations. The cloak-and-dagger nature of these technologies makes assassination countermeasures extremely challenging.”

“I understand...”

“Furthermore, the royal palace anticipates that come spring, neighboring countries may seek the power of the fairy realm.

Hence, the urgency to resolve as many issues as possible this winter.”

“Is it wise to discuss such matters here?”

“Well, it’s not ideal, but this room is soundproof. Besides, Duster-san, you’re already collared by the kingdom.”

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

Did Duster-san not realize he was wearing a collar? I had to steer the conversation back.

“Moving on, Duster-san, your mission is to investigate the location of the dragon’s appearance and provide security for the investigative team.”

“So, I don’t really have a choice?”

“Correct.”

“...Understood. Before that, though, is the Guild Master absent?”

“Yes, compiling reports at the guild headquarters. Due to unforeseen circumstances, departure was delayed. If they can return before the snowfall, it’s manageable. Otherwise, it might be next spring.”

“I see... In that case, please hold onto this for me until needed.”

“What is it? A sword? Sure, but why?”

I’d never heard of adventurers leaving spare swords at the guild, especially one of such caliber. Then it dawned on me.

“It’s a Fairy Sword.”

“So what? Just use it!”

“No... carrying it might... make me a target for... trolls.”

What could that possibly mean?

# Chapter 181 - House

Snow. It's not accumulating much yet, but the onset of snowfall suggests that winter might bring heavy snow.

During the period when the sun hid behind the white rainbow, the latter part was reasonably chilly but seemed to mellow out as days passed. Now that winter is here, the cold is returning. I've been dressed in thicker clothing to brace against it.

Since then, Silver-Haired Girl has ventured out again. She seemed preoccupied, perhaps engrossed in some pressing matters. Though she usually wears an impassive expression, I've started to discern subtle changes in her emotions. Living here, without understanding the language, has made me more attuned to such nuances.

Old Man and the muscular woman, whom I haven't seen in a while, left with Silver-Haired Girl. I haven't spotted Blond Guy recently either. In contrast, Hero remains at the castle. He should be out on adventures befitting his title. Nonetheless, I guess that's why he's periodically subjected to trials.

Now, in my room, a plump merchant and what seems like a craftsman are present. The plump merchant is the one who provides me with dresses and accessories. The craftsman is installing a dollhouse against one wall. Apparently, I'm getting my own residence. With this, I can withstand the winter's chill and snowstorms. Goodbye, confined life; hello, dream home!

They're placing a small table by the wall, seemingly for the dollhouse. They connect the bare walls of the dollhouse to the room, adding floors and stairs. Yes, stairs. It's a two-story affair, quite sizable.

Considering I'm about 15 cm tall, it would make this a 1/6 scale dollhouse. It's taller than the Maid's entire height in the birdcage.

They start furnishing the exposed dollhouse, enclosing it with walls and adding a roof. The doors and windows are pre-installed on the

stone walls, constructed meticulously with genuine small stones, lacking any plastic-like cheapness.

Before I know it, the dollhouse stands complete—a grand, stone-built house with a blue roof, tailored to my size. The craftsman looks at me, inviting a tour.

First, the entrance—a grand door adorned with a black dragon-head knocker. Pulling a string attached to it reveals a human-sized lever, making the knocker sound. Ingenious, though perhaps overly elaborate.

Opening the door reveals a surprise: a doll of myself inside! It wasn't there before. Perhaps they placed it while assembling the dollhouse.

It's unsettling, sharing such close quarters. Though I've lived under one roof in the castle, this confinement feels different.

For now, I'll let it be.

The interior is lavish, akin to a noble's mansion I visited by the sea. Two rooms on the first floor, one occupied by my doll. Upstairs, a bedroom with a canopy bed. The dresser and closet are empty but functional. The fireplace, however, is purely decorative.

Suddenly, the craftsman peers through the window, startling me. I've grown accustomed to large humans, but seeing a magnified face through the window sends shivers down my spine. I must add curtains to all windows.

After giving them a sign of approval, the craftsman slides a section of the dollhouse, revealing its inner workings.

Intrusive, but I must adapt. Once the explanations conclude, the craftsman and plump merchant depart.

It's odd; usually, Door-sama attends such events, but he's absent. Rumors suggest he's preoccupied with marriage arrangements for his son or Hero. Unclear, but intriguing.

Now, it's leisure time. I contemplate indoor activities since it's chilly outside.

I lay out a board game but decide against playing, knowing I'd lose. Instead, I set up two metal rods, producing bars as I envision them. Creating a seesaw mechanism, I set it on a pivot. My aim is simple: roll a marble-sized ball down a rail to strike the board's pieces, akin to bowling.

Given the board's apparent luxury, I enchant the ball to ensure it won't break anything. With a transparent, crystal-like appearance, it exudes a premium feel.

As I prepare to launch, Birdcage Maid interrupts me with a message. I ponder for a moment, contemplating whether to proceed or not. Fruit? What's this about?

What could it be?



# Chapter 182 - Broken Engagement

“Ephyris, I must ask you to annul our engagement.”

“...May I inquire as to the reason?”

The words from Prince Cross, the heir to the throne of Saint Kingdom, caught me off guard. Despite his apologetic tone, his expression was chillingly cold, his gray eyes piercing through his pale blue hair.

“You are aware, aren’t you? The empire has lost. Consequently, your sister’s engagement to the Second Prince of the Empire has been nullified.”

The Saint Kingdom, where we were, had survived through the ages by maintaining a protective barrier around its borders.

This barrier not only kept out malicious creatures but also warded off external hostilities, effectively shielding the small nation from the ongoing territorial disputes and invasions.

However, this barrier had its downsides. While it protected the citizens, it also isolated them from the outside world, resulting in minimal interactions and making the kingdom seem almost like a closed-off nation. To foster external relationships, especially with the powerful neighboring empire, the strategy had been to strengthen ties through the marriage between the Saintly lineage and the imperial family. But with the empire’s recent defeat, those plans had unraveled.

“I never imagined they’d lose to such a backward nation. Despite their internal strife and famine, it seems the Western Barbarian Kingdom had enough military might.”

The Western Barbarian Kingdom—Farsian Kingdom, was it? From what I had learned during my royal education, it was a land slightly smaller than the empire, lacking in distinct industries. Recently, it had suffered from famines and was believed to be on the brink of being

absorbed by the empire due to their longstanding rivalry.

“Here’s the thing... They’ve proposed a union with that barbaric nation. Their prince, to be specific. Will you go?”

“I have little choice but to accept.”

With no power to refuse, I would go where instructed. Originally, I was betrothed to the Second Prince of the Empire, a match that had now been replaced by Farsian Kingdom. My sister, who had been destined for the empire, would now remain to maintain the barrier.

I had no particular feelings toward Prince Cross. My life revolved around tasks like infusing magical energy into the luminous spheres that maintained the barrier, honing my magical abilities, and continuing my education. I had scarcely interacted with Prince Cross.

“Departure is tomorrow. Prepare yourself. Details will follow.”

With those abrupt words, Prince Cross left. I had expected this move to happen perhaps by spring, but the urgency surprised me.

However, there were aspects I didn’t grasp. While I understood the broken engagement due to the empire’s defeat and the new proposal from Farsian Kingdom, the reason for choosing me remained unclear.

“Ah, sister, you’re still here?”

“Marie, you’ve returned. Welcome back.”

Marie, who had been in the empire since spring, seemed discontented.

“Can you believe it? All my plans for a luxurious life and territorial expansion are ruined.”

Territorial expansion? Marie continued, “Didn’t you know? While the barrier kept our lands safe, it also hindered our territorial growth. The idea was to use the empire for expansion.”

So that was the real intent behind the alliance with the empire.

“Given the state of that declining nation, they expect me to marry into such a place? I can’t even fathom it. Why don’t you go in my stead?”

Ah, so that was the reason for choosing me. The king must be aware, but he likely won’t intervene as long as the barrier remains intact.

As nations adjust their strategies post-war, the Saint Kingdom is at a pivotal point. Still, can I contribute to the recovery of such a devastated land? The barrier requires the luminous spheres, and my knowledge might be invaluable.

The intricate web of politics and alliances had taken a turn, and I found myself at its center, pondering my role in this unfolding drama.

# Chapter 183 - Unending Topics

“Sigh, I’ve just battled a dragon. I believe some rest is necessary...”

“What are you saying? You didn’t even sustain a single injury. There’s still a mountain of decisions to be made.”

Ugh, the way my wife treats me is harsh. Everyone seems to think they can just order me around. They assume I won’t tire thanks to the fairy’s blessing, but I do get tired like any normal person. However, the annoying thing is, no matter how much I work, my health remains intact. I still look healthy and ready to work more, at least according to others.

“As for that dragon, we haven’t decided what to do with it yet.”

“Why not make a stuffed specimen and display it in the hall? It’s a legendary dragon, after all. Selling it off as individual parts would be a waste.”

The Adventurer’s Guild, the Merchant Guild, even the Alchemist Guild—all of them wanted pieces of the dragon, but dividing it would only increase the paperwork. That’s too much hassle.

“I see, when spring comes, many envoys from other countries will visit. If, at that time, we have the legendary dragon displayed as a stuffed specimen, it can showcase our country’s strength. It should be more appealing for post-war reconstruction than acquiring random furnishings.”

The Prime Minister agreed with my opinion. When supporters emerge, it’s best to stay silent. This way, discussions will proceed without my input. If I interfere, they might just toss all decision-making power to me.

“Well then, let it be so. As for the meat and organs inside, wholesale them to the Adventurer’s Guild. They’ve been quite active with

dragon-related requests lately. They'll be satisfied with that."

My wife concurred. With that, this topic was concluded.

"By the way, we received a response from the Holy Kingdom."

Without missing a beat, I smoothly transitioned to the next topic. I want to move things along quickly and wrap up discussions. I won't tolerate dragging on with concluded matters.

"Yes, it's the response regarding the proposal for Prince Arland's engagement. The prospective partner is none other than the current Saintess Ephyris A Laravalest."

"Hmm."

Arland was originally engaged to a princess from a southern country. However, after sending her on a mission for food aid in spring, not only was the aid rejected, but the engagement was also annulled.

At first, I thought it couldn't be helped, but now Arland's official consort position is vacant. If the engagement isn't settled by next spring, ambitious nations seeking the fairy's power might come forward. It's troublesome to reject such nations. Therefore, I sent engagement proposals to a small country east of the empire.

"Their focus is on maintaining a barrier for defense, nearly isolating themselves. Their economy and industries are self-sufficient, and they don't interfere with other nations. Hence, they haven't been bothering us for the fairy's power. I

thought by proposing an engagement, we could form a connection with them. But I didn't expect them to offer the Saintess."

Choosing the Holy Kingdom had other reasons. East of the empire, many ambitious nations have a long history of warfare, constantly engaging in territorial disputes. However, the empire's presence deterred direct invasions into our kingdom. But with the empire's

power diminished after the recent war, eastern nations might attempt invasions. If the empire falls, the kingdom would be next. So, I eyed the small Holy Kingdom next to the empire. If this defense-focused nation becomes our ally, it would make it difficult for eastern nations to attack the empire directly.

However, my wife, who plans for the future, didn't expect the Holy Kingdom to offer their Saintess.

"Is it not a problem to send the Saintess outside for the barrier? Moreover, the Holy Kingdom's barrier technology was supposed to be strictly confidential. Won't sharing it with us be a concern?"

The Prime Minister raises a question. I remain silent. It's time to stay in the background.

"Perhaps the continuity of the barrier is not an issue as long as there are other women in the Saintess's lineage. They probably won't declare the downfall of the kingdom just because the Saintess was married off to another country. Besides, I heard that the barrier is centered around a luminous sphere located somewhere in the Holy Kingdom. The information leaked by a single Saintess may not be that crucial."

It's about time to wrap up this discussion. Let's move on to the next topic without asking for opinions.

"The Saintess is currently being fetched by Arland. Let's leave it to him for now."

"Yes, there's no other choice but to entrust it to the Crown Prince at the moment. Let's discuss this matter after the Crown Prince returns with the Saintess."

"Speaking of the Saintess's arrival, Crest wanted to go. What are your thoughts on Crest, the hero of the Fairy Shrine?"

The Fairy Shrine, which has been consistently silent, suddenly started

talking after the Garm incident. Though it called out the names of others, it specifically referred to Crest as a hero.

“That incident where the Fairy Deity declared the second prince as a hero. When we talk about heroes, in legends and fairy tales, they are often paired with the existence of a Demon Lord. However, there is no information on a Demon Lord in historical records. It was thought to be part of folklore, but now, with the appearance of a dragon, a Demon Lord might not be so far-fetched. Moreover, the Fairy Deity seems to be training Crest in various ways. Either way, we don’t know for sure now. We’ll have to watch and see.”

The Prime Minister looks troubled. Well, he always looks troubled anyway.

“The dragon that was thought to be part of folklore appeared. A Demon Lord might not be out of the question. Also, the Fairy Deity seems to be training Crest quite seriously. We can’t be sure of anything at this point. We just have to observe.”

Hmm, Crest supposedly walks down the corridor with spears popping out, turns a corner, and there’s a pitfall. The Fairy Deity is apparently doing all sorts of things to Crest, but to me, it just looks like mischief...

“Why not give Crest the fruit if you’re serious about training him? Why hasn’t that been done?”

“The Fairy Deity has instructed through a dedicated maid to avoid creating things recklessly. The things created by the Fairy Deity could disrupt the power balance in this world. Perhaps, the Fairy Deity refrains from making the fruit to adhere to that caution.”

“I see, I understand.”

Certainly, magical flying swords, fruits that make you superhuman, shields that withstand dragon flames, flying vehicles, small swords that cut through anything, a potion that dispels invisibility, and a magical necklace that allows you to use super magic—additionally,

barrier magical tools that protect against anything, and exploding dolls. If all these were mass-produced, it would drastically change the power dynamics. We may not be aware of others, but such creations could exist.

Oh well, thinking too much will prolong the meeting. We need to move on to the next agenda.

“Now, regarding the investigation of the dragon’s appearance location...”

There’s no end to the agenda. I think some rest is necessary, but...



# Chapter 184 - Tired

“Um, nice to meet you.”

“Huh? What the heck is this!?”

“Alcohol! Alcohol!”

“Excuse me! Nice to meet you!”

“Huh!? You’re so noisy!”

“Alcohol! The alcohol man!”

I heard that the head magician would be coming for the investigation of the dragon’s appearance, but I never expected such an elderly person. The investigation site is quite far, and I wonder if they’ll be okay. The future looks daunting from even before departure...

Moreover, I’m surrounded by the Fairy Deity flying around. I never thought the Fairy Deity would come too. She’s been chanting “alcohol, alcohol” since a while ago. I wonder if the Fairy Deity likes alcohol? And there’s also a maid with a birdcage.

“I’m sorry. Um, was it Duster-san? The head of the Magician’s Guild is currently heading to Eneria, so he’s the only knowledgeable magician available in the royal castle.”

One of the accompanying soldiers starts a conversation. I don’t really feel like talking to people, but I can’t help it. I have to try my best to converse until this mission is over.

“Um... What about the magicians who were at the eastern border? The war has ended, right?”

“Well, you see, they’re accompanying the ambassadors of Eneria and the Empire. Even after the war, there’s still a shortage of manpower. Hahaha.”

“I see...”

During the Stampedo incident, I heard that there were two magicians besides the head of the Magician’s Guild in the royal castle. One of them was apparently a spy from the Empire. The other one was this person. They didn’t appear as a force during the Stampedo. If they had such impaired hearing, they probably wouldn’t have received instructions properly, causing chaos on the scene.

“The Fairy Deity will guide us to the destination. Only the Fairy Deity knows the dragon’s appearance location.”

“Guidance! Guidance!”

“Hey, old man! It’s time to depart!”

“Huh? I’ve already eaten, you know!?”

We continue on to the destination by carriage. We left in the morning, so we should arrive by early afternoon. The carriage is taken care of by the soldiers.

“Young one, magic, you know! Not just for peace!”

Inside the carriage, only the old magician keeps talking loudly. I just nod in response. Though he calls me ‘young one,’

I’m also quite old. However, I don’t feel like correcting him. It probably won’t get through to him. The maid doesn’t speak at all.

“Sorry about that. He, during his active days, kept hearing the screams of the head of the Magician’s Guild next to him. It seems that’s why his hearing got bad.”

During the lunch break, a soldier mentioned such a thing. I see, if you keep hearing those screams continuously, your ears might go bad. The screams during the Stampede felt reassuring, but unexpectedly, there was a victim.

We continue towards our destination on the carriage. The old magician keeps talking loudly, and I just keep nodding. The Fairy Deity is flying around, eating a small piece of bread. When she finishes eating, she suddenly flies off somewhere.

The maid starts panicking with a dance-like movement. Watching her in a hurry, the Fairy Deity returns.

Leaving the relieved maid behind, the Fairy Deity flies off again. The panicking maid watches her, and the Fairy Deity returns once more. She seems to be playing around. A smile escapes me involuntarily. This country has also become peaceful.

After the lunch break, we depart, and after a while, the Fairy Deity starts circling around in one place as we continue on the carriage. Presumably, that's the location where the dragon appeared.

“Dragon! Magic circle, around, people, spin around!”

“Whoa!? This is an amazing spell!”

“...Um?”

“Magic circle! Spin around!”

“Probably referring to a summoning circle. I heard a bit about it beforehand. The practitioner was circling around the summoning circle. Hey, old man! Do you see any traces?”

“Huh? This is an ancient summoning circle! No doubt about it! Whoa!”

“Old man, so was the dragon summoned artificially?”

“Huh? Don’t bother me, I’m busy!”

“Ah...”

Is this investigation going to be okay?

“Alcohol man! Over there! Over there!”

The Fairy Deity pulls at my clothes. Does she mean something is over there? I’ll leave it to the magician and go check over there. Following the Fairy Deity’s guidance, the maid also joins. Or could it be that she’s calling me the alcohol man?

“Here! Here! Dig here, woof woof!”

“Woof woof? ...Wait, is this a spirit stone?”

It’s not just an ordinary magic stone. It’s similar to the stone attached to the moving Fairy Deity doll’s chest. It’s much smaller than that one, but there’s no mistake. Following the Fairy Deity’s lead, we discover spirit stones at the corners surrounding the summoning circle. The maid and I exchange glances.

“Hey, it’s a spirit stone. There are spirit stones here!”

“Whoa!? Who are you?”

...This investigation is tiring.